

GREEN LINE

Greens support the Miners
A future for trees?
Talking to Porritt
Molesworth Green Village

No 27 November 1984 30p



GREEN LINE

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Missed a recent issue?

John Stannard, who has faithfully and doggedly kept our accounts and subscription records for 2½ years, has had to give the work up. We owe him an enormous debt of thanks. Meanwhile, the transfer to new helpers has not gone without its hitches, and some subscribers may have missed a recent issue. We're very sorry if this applies to you: please

write for your missing issue(s), and we'll refund your postage!!

Helping with Green Line

Last month's appeal for new help in the production of GL drew three responses: we now have a cheerful team of five, and look forward to developing a new "look" to the magazine. Feed-back from you, the writer/reader, is vital! We're still looking for someone in or near Oxford to come and do some or all of the typing for each issue. And if you live further afield, you could help by ensuring that your local radical bookshop takes GL (and what about your peace group; FoE, Eco, etc. bookstalls?). Let us hear from you!

Price Increase

Printing and postage increases mean we must raise our cover price (held at 30p since October 1982) to 40p from December. Bulk discounts will improve too (5 or more copies will cost only 30p each, 10 or more will be only 25p each). Subscription rates will remain UNCHANGED. If you have a standing order and wish to change it, please let us know as soon as possible.

Deadlines

Next issue out December 1st. Articles in a.s.a.p., news and shorts by November 14 please. Following issue out February 1, then monthly again.

Subscriptions

A year's GL (10 issues) costs £4. Overseas rate £4.60.

Bulk Orders

5 copies 25p each post free, 10 or more copies only 20p each. Standing orders on request. Sale-or-Return for special events only. Trade terms too.

Back Issues

Six assorted for the special price of £1.50 post free.

MAKE MONEY FOR YOUR LOCAL GREEN GROUPS (or for yourself!) BY SELLING GREEN LINE. ORDER COPIES TODAY!!

Small Ads

5p/word

MEDITATION RETREAT for peace activists. November 16th - 18th at Seniors Farmhouse, Semley, Shaftesbury, Dorset. (0747/3961) To clarify and deepen awareness of the links between inner and outer change. Talks, exercises, sharing, meditation. Led by Christopher Titmuss. Send s.a.e. for details and bookings.

INTERHELP BADGES AND STICKERS including "Think Globally - Act Locally", "Give Back the Earth", and "You Can't Hug a Child with Nuclear Arms". Free catalogue (sae): Overcourt Cottage no. 2H, Bisley, Stroud, Glos.

SCOTLAND, WALES, East Anglia, Wessex, London, Cornwall, Northern England. Parts of a future federal Britain with real self-government for its member nations and regions? Intrigued? Read "The Regionalist", £1 for 2 issues from Dawyd Robyns, 55 Eaton Crescent, Swansea, Cymru.

COMMUNES NETWORK magazine is produced by and for people involved - or just interested - in living and working collectively. Costs £5 per 10 issues, 50p for 1. For further information send SAE to: Communes Network, c/o Some People in Leicester, 89 Evington Road, Leicester LE2 1QH.

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COAL

AND
ECONOMIC
GROWTH

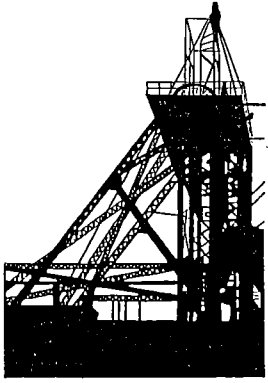


THE WALES ECOLOGY PARTY
20p

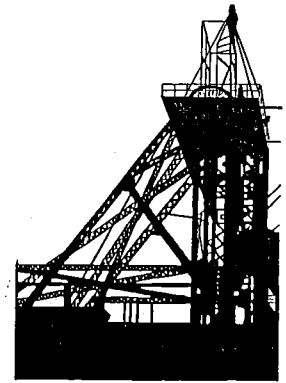
Full of background facts for the present dispute; an analysis of the strike and government policy in terms of economic demands; and a way forward for coal towards a sustainable energy future.

20p + 13p stamp from Green Line.

THE GLASTONBURY Earth Mysteries Gathering takes place this year on the weekend of November 10 - 11 at the Assembly Rooms, High Street, Glastonbury. Cost-sharing £3.50. No tickets, just turn up. Queries to Jamie George (0458 31528) or Palden Jenkins (0458 31453).



GREENS SUPPORT THE MINERS



THE ECOLOGY PARTY totally condemns this government for its failures in economic strategy, its constitutional responsibilities, and its political strategy, in deliberately choosing a confrontational approach in the question of coal pit economics.

Considering all the issues, we support the mining communities' arguments on pit closures.

We note that successive governments have failed to produce a coherent long-term strategy for energy.

The Ecology Party recognises that the degree of violence has reached catastrophic levels; that it will not serve the cause of the mining communities' future; and urges nonviolent direct action and a more socially responsible approach as a method of restoring public support for their case.

However, we recognise that the violence is a consequence and not a cause of the trouble, and that ultimate responsibility for it lies with this Government. We pledge ourselves to oppose the dramatic threat to civil liberties being promoted by the Government's actions in the present dispute.

We reject the current National Coal Board definition of an exhausted pit. The resolution of this dispute requires the adoption of a method of fully assessing the economics of pit closure, taking full account of the social impact, the strategic value of the remaining coal, and the need for regeneration of local economies before pits close.

Any long-term strategy must include plans for community-based economic regeneration in order to meet the needs of those communities. We recommend all Ecology Party members to get involved in their local miners' support groups.

We are totally opposed to a national militarised police force which will inevitably exist if the Government wins this dispute. We affirm that any rational, sustainable energy policy for the UK would be largely based on a well-invested coal industry with full pollution controls, and on the abandonment of the nuclear power and weapons programme as long advocated by the Ecology Party.

● THE ABOVE RESOLUTION was passed enthusiastically by the Ecology Party Conference in Southport last month. Below, DAVE MELLOR - who proposed the resolution - expands on some of the ideas and the reasoning behind it.

THE FACT that the Ecology Party has passed a resolution on such a hot issue as the coal dispute is in itself a bit of a milestone. I'm glad to have been one of the people who contributed to it, along with all the others who gave their time and energy (many of them living in or near mining communities).

No doubt it will cause shudders of concern to run through some party members, and maybe even among the rest of the green movement. But I hope this expansion of the arguments will bring some reassurance that we have not gone any way off course.

The position taken is one of support not for Scargill but for the mining communities themselves. They are faced with undoubtedly dire consequences from these abrupt closure plans.

How can we not respond to people trying to protect that complex of places, people, relationships, history and future that we call "communities"? Is that not a vital part of the ecological perspective? Aren't mining communities as valuable as any other communities, despite the unpleasant and dirty way they contribute to OUR prosperity - for that is what they do?!

Should we not have said anything which could be interpreted as taking sides? Cautious voices said, No, the issue is too complex and the dangers of

media distortion too great. Fortunately Conference thought otherwise: and to the surprise of many they actually wanted to say something about the issue. If the Ecology Party cannot speak because an issue is too complex or open to misinterpretation, then why does it exist at all?

Some wanted to make a conventional eco-statement. But muttering in the background about "the transitional period" or "in an ecological society..." is not what the situation requires. We all have to face the issue as it is: a violent political struggle, and not an exercise in green theorising.

We blame the Government for failing in its economic strategy and so leading to the NCB trying to make emergency economies by a crash plan for pit closures. The same economic failures make it impossible for the mining communities to accept such actions. Their backs are against the wall: no sunrise industries are waiting to rush into these areas. It's fight or die.

The Government have also failed constitutionally. They have completely failed to see that it is more than a two-way struggle: that there is the third "public interest" point of view which cannot (as they have done) be automatically identified with the

(continued on page 19)



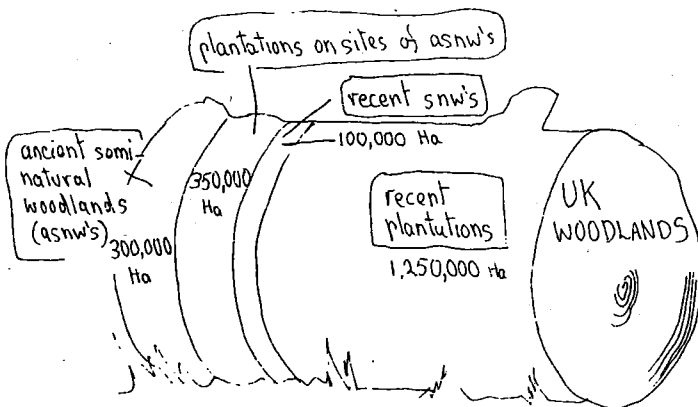
A FUTURE FOR FORESTS

THIS SEMINAR, well organised by Avon FoE, catered for information and ideas sharing by specialists and non-specialists alike, and the days were clearly attended by a wide variety of human types! Day One was devoted to 'Britain's Forests in the Context of Europe', and many of the issues to emerge centered on the role of the Forestry Commission. Their policy on upland conifer plantation and the replacement of lowland natural broadleaved woodlands transformed into 'economic' plantations was strongly defended by their speaker. Dr Oliver Rackham's clear elucidation and slide display of the differences between traditionally managed woodland (no truly British wildwood) and modern plantations helped us all to see the wood in spite of the trees - and a university economist presented many more with ammunition with his viewpoint of the economic non-viability of upland conifer plantations.

KAY WEDGBURY reports on a three-day conference held in Bristol last July.

Another big issue was presented with great impact by Herbie Girardet's slides showing the effects of acid rain in Europe. The combined effects of sulphur dioxide from fossil fuel burners and the increasing level of nitrous oxide from modern cars has affected 60% of Germany's forests. The European surplus of timber is partly a result of early felling of dead and dying trees before they rot, while for the long term shortages will occur as young trees fail to develop. These trees are like the canaries down the mine; yet our Government will not budge from its perch and will not agree to EEC directives proposing emission controls. The FC sat very much on the fence here, but clearly admitted that more testing should be carried out in Britain.

To wind up a heavy but lively day, Richard Mabey entertained us with his tale of community forestry in Berkshire. He bought a neglected 16 acre woodland and involved to a remarkable measure the help and participation of the locals. It is now regularly managed and has been opened up so that all can walk and wonder inside it. It was children who, clambering through the exposed roots of laurel bushes he had intended removing, discovered not only an adult-proof play area but also places where



Fierce panel/floor debates followed during the day with the Forestry Commission taking continual criticism on its policies and its view that it is there to implement Government policies and not to advise or pressure Government on what is best for Britain from any rounded or holistic viewpoint (which it does not have). An opponent read out a letter the FC sends out to prospective buyers (it has to raise £82m from sales of its land). The letter does not mention timber - only the tax advantages buyers could gain from a purchase, especially by 'loosing' tax on profitless forestry.



badgers sharpened their claws - so the laurel was left. Adults asked to clear their own pathway - and not simply clear a line from A to B - made an interesting pathway naturally winding round the trees.

Winding my way to the second day, "Tropical Rain Forests", I expected more hot debate. But possibly the very hot weather and the shortage of time kept the debate cooler. We listened to Brazilian and Malaysian speakers telling us that although wrong had been done, government policies had changed, the right laws were now in operation, and all was changing for the better. One had sympathy for the Brazilian when realising that his country is twice the size of Western Europe: it took a US satellite to notice, relay the information, and ask the Brazilian government what on earth was the source of what appeared to be a huge conflagration in Amazonia! Well, it was only the Volkswagen company clearing a bit of forest for their new beef (US hamburgers) grazing ranches. No longer, we were assured, and no more loans for new clearing operations - only for improvement of old ones. Dare we hope?

The Malaysian gave us a rather 'tourist' presentation with slides of appealing monkeys and all that, plus lots of facts and figures: but we were not reassured.



The highlight of the day was surely Mr Latham for the Timber Trades Federation. His polished, professional presentation started with some useful historical background. He bemoaned the fact that timber operations in colonial countries fell apart after independence. But big power know-how and technology can still carry us forward to continue (and control?) this important trade which is second only to oil. He continued to give us a classic display of that dangerous, dated, narrow viewpoint which sees use of world resources solely in bare economic terms without the wider environmental context so needed now - though not to be found in the Timber Trades Federation. He pointed out to us the beautiful Nigerian mahogany parquet floor beneath us: wasn't this hard evidence of the value and importance of the tropical hardwood trade? Sure it was. Nigeria is now an importer of timber and timber products!

A floor participant commented on the lack of any sense of urgency from most of the second day speakers, and it was left to the workshops on the final day for the participants to air their views amongst themselves on the problems facing the remaining virgin forest (and their surviving indigenous peoples).

I attended a workshop which showed the results of Brazilian scientific research on forests and rainfall. Their forests augment, via transpiration, the raincloud formation which blows across from the Atlantic (75% of rainfall recirculates via the trees into the atmosphere). Without the extensive forest, most rainfall would be lost directly into rivers and less would fall on cropland further inland. How much forest loss would cause how much diminution of rainfall no one knows. That rainforests contain vast numbers of plant and animal species, many still unknown and certainly very much under-researched, cannot be denied. Malaysia has 7,900 known flowering plants compared to Britain's 1,430. The indigenous inhabitants are a key for they hold within their cultures enormous knowledge of forest life. The two can only be saved together.

The difficulties FoE faces in mounting a Tropical Forest Campaign are many. While an area the size of Britain is lost in the Amazon each year, only about 6% of our timber imports are currently from such areas. Japan is a far greater enemy and in fact leaves its own considerable forests intact in preference to wholesale clearance of tropical sites and reduces much of this 'crop' to woodchips. FoE's policy is that it must be seen to be putting this country's house in order, and to this end will hold a tropical rainforest campaign workshop this autumn.

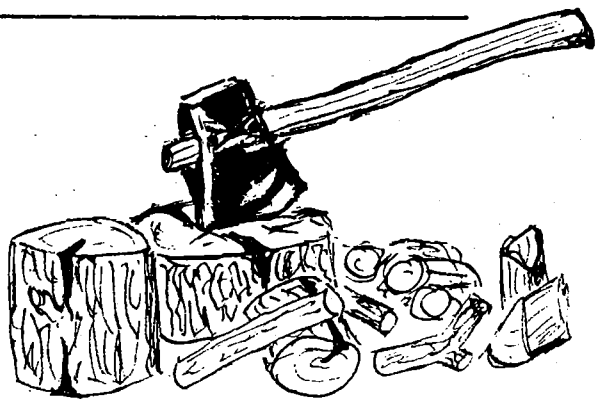
The treatment meted out to our forests in NW Europe, still continuing in Britain, foreshadowed that now being experienced in tropical zones where 20 hectares a minute are being destroyed. But our wet and mild climate allows large deforested areas to escape severe ecological damage such as climatic change and erosion which for example followed Mediterranean and North African deforestation. However our European conifers are acting as barometers and warning us of the consequences of continued industrial growth. The coniferous trees suffer first as they keep their leaves for 2 - 7 years, and are often in areas downwind from high chimneys and where local climates have concentrated air pollution. Also suffering, inevitably, are agricultural crops, waterways, lakes and buildings.

Paradoxically this blanket pollution has been exacerbated by motor manufacturers raising the temperatures to compensate for loss of power encountered by engines which have to comply with lead-free petrol laws. These 'hotter' engines spew out greater amounts of nitrous oxides - a component of acid rain.

This makes statements by our present Minister of Transport, which glorify the private motor car, obscene and shows that removal of pollutants from industrial effluent is only a palliative, when what is needed is radical change of the standards and assumptions by which we live and work. Forests are not just forests; they supply us with many needs, protect the planet, and now give warning that our demands are too high.

Kay Wedgbury





ALISTAIR DANIER is a volunteer forestry worker working with IVS on a small 'social forestry' project in an isolated rural area in the mountains of southwest Swaziland.

the FIREWOOD CRISIS

FOR MORE than a third of the world's population the real energy crisis is the daily task of finding wood to cook with. There is little international focus on the scarcity of firewood, yet the problem is enormous and getting worse each year. As one Indian official recently said, "Even if we somehow grow enough food for our people in the year 2000, how in the world will they cook it?"

In most poor countries today, 90% of the people depend on firewood as their chief source of fuel, and each year the average user burns from one fifth of a ton (in poor, wood-short areas such as India) to well over a ton (in parts of Africa and SE Asia). In 1983 in one week the Green Gathering in Somerset burnt well over 20 tons of firewood.

One of the obvious results of this scarcity is that as firewood prices rise, so does the economic burden on the poor. In some urban areas in the developing world the price of firewood rose by more than 300% between 1978 and 1980. In some cases the rise in the price of firewood has been prompted by the rising cost of imported fossil fuels. But firewood prices have often risen faster than fossil fuel prices, a fact that reflects the growing difficulty in obtaining wood. In Nepal, gathering firewood is now a day's work; a generation ago the same work would have taken a couple of hours.

Throughout the developing world those who can possibly pay the price for wood and charcoal do so, spending much of their income on fuel and thus foregoing consumption of other vital commodities. Wood is accepted as one of the major expenses of living.

In the past most firewood was burnt in the villages. However, as wood prices in the towns increase, landowners find an advantage in carting their available timber to the nearest town to sell instead of giving it to rural labourers. This commercialisation of firewood raises the hope that entrepreneurs will start to plant trees to develop a profitable, labour-intensive business: but so far the usual result has been the depletion of woodland. In either case the rural poor with little or no cash to spare are in deep trouble.

Scarcity of firewood creates further problems. Once the farmland trees and the scrubby woodlands of unfarmed areas begin to disappear, both the needy and the entrepreneurs tend to poach for firewood in legally protected national forest reserves. These reserves are essential to the economy and ecology of a country.

One reason that the firewood scarcity has not provoked much world attention is that the shortage appears essentially local and seems limited in its consequences to the actual users of the wood. But the problem is spreading into larger areas, increasing in severity and exacerbating other problems. In this sense it is like the oil crisis. If dwindling oil reserves threaten the productivity of our industrial system, the deforestation that results in part from gathering firewood threatens a significant proportion of the world's agricultural system. ("Forestry supports agriculture" - Mao Tse Tung.) Much deforestation is intentional, carried out to clear more land for agriculture. Some clearing and a great deal of woodland depletion occurs because wood is needed for fuel, and the frequent result is reduced productivity of the land due to accelerated soil erosion, increasingly severe flooding, and creeping deserts.

Another major way in which firewood scarcity is causing severe damage to countries is that the scarcity is resulting in a reliance on animal manure for fuel. Between 300 and 400 million tons of wet dung (60 to 80 million tons when dried) is burned annually in India robbing farmland of nutrients and organic material. In some African countries it is now illegal to burn dung - a form of legislation that is impossible to enforce.

SOLUTIONS ~

Fortunately trees when properly managed are a renewable resource. The immediate logical response to the firewood shortage, one that will have many incidental ecological benefits, is to plant more trees in plantations, on farms, along roads, in shelter belts and on unused land throughout the rural areas of poor countries. For many regions fast-growing varieties of tree are available that can be culled for firewood in less than 10 years. Many of these species regenerate freely and their coppice regrowth is prolific. Often trees will grow in land that is totally useless for other forms of plant life.

Tree planting schemes, besides being relatively inexpensive, do not require masses of foreign exchange or technology. Provided that good supervision is available, many schemes can be carried out by unskilled workers who are already available and underemployed in countries with severe energy shortages.

The introduction of improved wood conserving stoves, biogas reactors and solar cookers can also help to solve the problem - though these in themselves can cause problems, as will be shown later. Even with these technologies an additional 20 - 30 million hectares of trees must be planted by the year 2000. At the present rate of reforestation this is ten times more than will be achieved.

Firewood production can be good for economic development in rural areas. Growing trees for firewood can be successfully combined with the production of posts, poles and timber. The production and sale of wood to nearby urban centres can provide many jobs and much rural cash income. It has been estimated that some 6000 families are involved in supplying wood and charcoal to Mapute, the capital of Mozambique. No other energy source can provide and maintain such high employment.

Firewood plantings can use species with short boles, crooked trunks or wood that warps or splits as it dries. These features are not as detrimental to firewood use as to timber production. Nor is stem size. In simple stoves branches as small as one or two centimetres may be ideal. In practice firewood may come both as a primary crop from firewood forests and as a secondary crop from timber forests.

IMPLEMENTATION ~

The concept is simple: implementation is not. Tree planting schemes have existed in developing countries for a long time - in some even for decades. The problems have been in implementation of the programmes where local land tenure systems, increases in population swallowing up the moderate programmes that have succeeded, and the indifference of national leaders to whom the scarcity of firewood does not seem urgent have all affected implementation. With elections to fight, wars to win, dams to build, hungry mouths to feed, BMWs to buy along with other 'vital' consumer goods that are being foisted on the developing nations in the quest for 'new markets' by the growth-oriented economies both left and right of the north, it is hard for the politicians to concentrate funds and attention on the problem. Tree planting campaigns do not win elections.

Appropriate technology, which may seem part of the solution, also suffers problems of implementation. Cultural and dietary preferences can result in rejection of appropriate wood conserving stoves. Considerable extension and demonstration work is needed to convert people to the use of new stoves. Unexpected problems may arise: for example some Nepalese villagers recently abandoned highly efficient and successful stoves when their thatched roofs, no longer infiltrated by smoke, became infested by termites.



Even when the political will is there and funds are allocated, reforestation campaigns are unexpectedly difficult and complex. Planting millions of trees and managing them to maturity is a totally different task from a well-bounded technical project such as building a factory. For example, many of the regions with too few trees also have too many cattle, sheep and goats which will graze planted trees. This is particularly obvious in Swaziland which is in the ironic position of having the largest man-made forest in the world, yet at the same time has a severe deforestation problem. "Labola" - dowry payment in cattle for marriage - is still custom: cattle are a status symbol. Any reduction in land available for grazing, even if it is useless grazing, is viewed with suspicion. The western idea of replacing boundless communal land with fenced boundaries is not readily accepted.

Reforestation requires massive popular support. Tree planting programmes are most successful when local communities are most involved and when people can clearly see that success is in their self-interest.

The failure of many affected countries to meet the firewood challenge does not reflect an absence of suitable technologies, but a failure of political systems and of social organisation. Should firewood shortages continue to worsen, no dramatic event like an Arab oil embargo will flash crisis signals to the world. For the world's poor, the energy "emergency" is a constant reality, one submerged in the daily struggle to get by. A deepening firewood crisis, and the environmental degradation it entails, mean a steady deterioration in their prospects for a better life.



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POLITICS OF THE LAND!



IF THE politics of ecology are an expression of the need for a movement towards a more qualitative way of life, then our strategic priority should be in determining those political/economic/legislative measures which, in an overall sense, possess the greatest potential for facilitating the transition from our present wasteful, centralised and exploitative society towards the green ideal of future possibility.

Though such transition might occur in a multiplicity of ways at both local and national levels, blending with and responding to socio-economic change in the world around us, it is important that in order to maximise the translation of ideas into personal and political influence and effect, we have to be clear in the fiscal expression of our ideals.

To my mind, it is our economic view that is our major strength, pointing as it does towards a greater sense of social security for all, and which in strategic terms needs to be projected to the fore. The question is how to present our truth in such a way as best to catch the eye, mind and heart of the public; or to take the question a stage further, which aspects of economic policy need greatest emphasis.

While critiques of the intricacies of present economic practice proliferate, basic inequalities continue to manifest themselves in a wide variety of social, economic and ecological problems, these in turn becoming the subject of intense debate as to possible solutions. Consistently, both political and economic pundits continue to apply their critical faculties merely to a consideration of symptoms, whilst underlying causes remain covered up and ignored. The status quo remains undisturbed.

Taking the view that economics is the working out of the relationship between people and all resources (expressed in the term "land"), it is self-evident that any imbalance in the nature of this relationship will find repeated expression throughout the organisation of all economic transaction, no matter what form or shape the 'system' may take. Personal freedoms and economic freedoms are inextricably intertwined, and essential questions of liberty centre around the use and control of resources, who determines this use, the nature of such use, and the motivation behind such use. The entire structure and nature of society is in the end largely determined by the balance of this equation between people and resources.

Any brief examination of the conditions under which the "free market" economy operates will reveal the increasing monopolisation of power (in terms of capital, land and information), with corporate groupings looking upon the world as nothing more than a vast Monopolyboard upon which to play their financial games - though in deadly earnest and with often deadly effect.

If the foundation of the economy is rooted in this relationship between people and resources, then the prime requisite for the initiation of the process of decentralisation and localisation of investment and work creation is the removal of that monopoly, and all privilege and advantage that is gained thereby.

The land monopoly has been described as the mother of all monopolies, and if the greening vision recognises the necessity of a full coming to terms with the land, the earth upon which we live and depend, then it is our responsibility to bring this neglected question to the attention of the British electorate. Perhaps the full empowerment of the individual within the community is dependent upon the dismantling of the land resource monopoly as exists in this country.

The land has always played a central role in our historical development as a nation; and yet for more than 50 years the land question has been largely ignored, neglected or covered up within the political arena.

Until such time as there is a just resolution to this basic question, investment institutions will continue to pour £millions into land and property while manufacturing industry is starved of much needed capital. Thousands of acres of land in our inner cities will be held out of use by land speculators while prime farmland is swallowed up by fringe urban 'developments'. Speculators will continue to deny community involvement in any decision-making, thus depriving people of work, leisure and housing opportunities. Rent and property prices will continue to spiral while the housing conditions of the poor will worsen. Agribusiness capitalisation will continue to threaten the small farmer and rural ecologies, and rural economies and communities will continue their decline. These are but some of the consequences of the existing system of land resource ownership and capital speculation in land values.

If we are looking for a foundation for the revolution of mind and heart which we seek, then it might well be found in a concentration upon the possible birth of a "land ethic" in Britain, perhaps to provide a sense of unity allied to political/economic/spiritual cause, within a more realistic and greening perspective than any narrow nationalism of the past.

Not only does the land question serve as a central plank in our transitional planning, it could also serve to arouse a considerable interest through the publicising of its extended socio-economic implications and ramifications. Though it is by no means a general panacea for all the ailments of modern society, it is - as an underlying cause - responsible for many, and in the light of adequate publicity could prove of considerable political appeal to a wider section of the British public than might usually be familiar with the evocations of the greening vision, whether living in Wimbledon, Wiltshire or the Wirral.

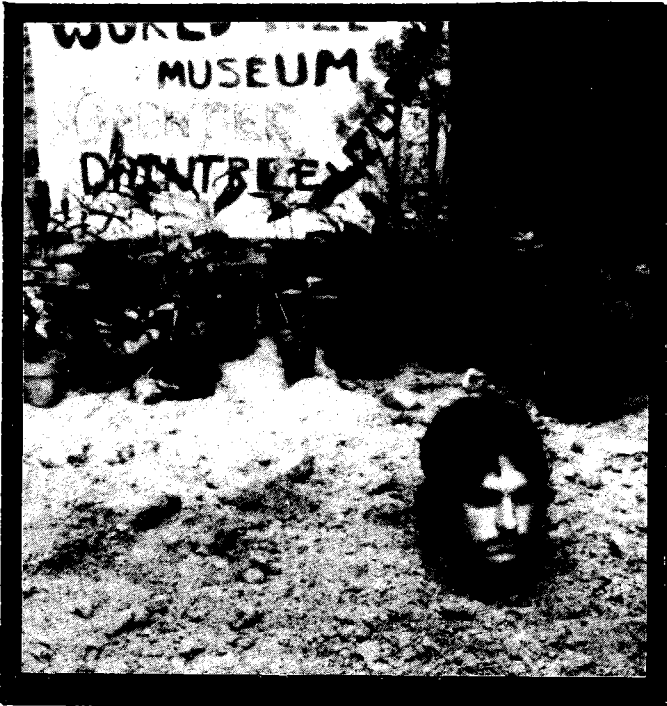
As a question of political strategy, this could be of some worth.

Bruce Mackenzie



IN DEFENCE OF DAINTREE

Ian Cohen
John Seed



ONCE MORE, conservationists are gathering in Australia's far north to prevent bulldozers from moving back into the coastal lowland tropical rainforest wilderness. In December 1983 a small number of conservationists gathered for a spirited defence of this forest. They physically blockaded the local council's bulldozers in a series of actions which confounded both workers and a strong contingent of police.

The month-long direct action campaign witnessed 40 arrests while conservationists successfully utilised the resources of the natural environment. They locked themselves high up in trees, buried each other up to their necks in the path of the machinery, and suspended themselves from ropes between trees marked for felling. Police were forced to employ rescue equipment and a lot of hard work to extract and arrest the demonstrators. Hostility was succeeded by incredulity as police swung from trees and dug protestors out of the ground.

When the rains started in earnest, creeks flooded the access routes. One critical section of the track took on the appearance of a muddy football field in the late stages of a match as the environmentalists, wet, muddy and slippery, successfully brought the dozers to a halt.

The police then stated that they would be returning in six hours with reinforcements and helicopters. That was six months ago, and the blockade of logs at the start of the new scar in the forest still

stands. The chains with which protestors bolted themselves to trees or to the earth are rusty but ready for use. The weather has cleared and the council has stated its intention to resume work on the road. Sixty to eighty conservationists have set up camps at both ends of the proposed road and more are arriving daily.

The proposed road is only the thin end of the wedge regarding development in this splendid Greater Daintree wilderness. The Queensland Forestry Department has plans to log virgin rainforest as access becomes possible. Tin miners are working nearby. Real estate developers (who have been carving similar lowland rainforest into two-acre residential blocks nearby) are anxious to expand their activities.

The forests of the Greater Daintree are refugia for many species like Bennets Tree Kangaroo - rare, endangered, endemic. Their habitat is suffering accelerated destruction though much of the flora and fauna is undescribed and awaits study.

Botanists regard the area as a living museum. Studies of fossilised pollen show that the forest has inhabited the region continuously for over a hundred million years, undisturbed by volcanic activity or incursions from the sea. Before continental drift broke Australia apart from Antarctica, South America, Africa and the rest of Gondwanaland, these forests existed in all this place, and the presence here of the most primitive of all flowering, fruiting plants leads scientists to speculate that this may have been the birth-place of flowering plants upon the earth.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has identified the tropical forests as being the world's number one conservation priority.



JONATHON PORRITT,

mid-30s, product of public school and Oxford, a dedicated teacher, son of a baronet with a peerage to inherit - unique perhaps among the green movement for being a democratically acclaimed 'leader' (his position in the Ecology Party having always been confirmed impressively at internal party elections), and now being employed equally decisively by FoE to revamp its own sense of purpose and link that pressure group into the international movement of green politics.

I started by asking him about his career ambitions: did he envisage a career in environmentalism? The answer is a (fairly) firm No. After nine years in one school it was time to move, and the FoE job came at an opportune moment; but he expects to go back to teaching one day. Of his political commitment generally, Jonathon ascribes it to the intellectual overview which the ecological understanding of the world gave him: his description of his 'conversion' is of a conversion first and foremost of the head. In his undergraduate days he voted Liberal and was an occasional attender at Bow Group meetings: it was only later on that things fell into place...

Are greens and political ecologists always the same animal? "There is a very complicated balance between Conservative greens - who I actually have difficulty in seeing as greens quite often - and Anarchist greens who I think are probably closer to the notion of what green politics is. But of course one shouldn't discount the fact that there are anarchist conservatives!" But what of the socialist tradition: there are both socialist and anarchist antecedents in the green tradition, and would they always be at odds with each other? "The problem will arise, I think, with the interpretation of socialism. If one follows through one particular strand of socialist thinking, I don't think there would be any clash at all between the anarchist tradition and the socialist tradition. If one was to take the contemporary interpretation of socialism with its emphasis on centralised planning, it would be different. But I don't think there is any clash in terms of the enormously important historical connections between green politics and that strand of decentralist socialism at all. That's become a very important part of my thinking on it, and I don't think that anarchists would necessarily fall out with those coming from that part of the socialist spectrum either."

I suggested, however, that it is hard to envisage any kind of socialism that doesn't make central provision - from resources provided by a very centralised economy - for problems of welfare; while the anarchist alternative of the decentralised very small community may entail suffering on the part of its members where a community may decide not to care beyond a certain point. The green utopia doesn't always look a very comfortable place in which to live! He agreed that this is one of "the complications" about a commitment to decentralisation, since it could remove the safety net which the welfare state at present provides, however unsatisfactorily. "That happens to be one of my reservations about out-and-out anarcho-decentralisation. I can't help feeling though that

the eco-utopia you refer to is going by design to be pragmatic as well as idealistic in its formation. There will necessarily have to be a balance between what can be done through the intervention of the state (that state may be whittled down, but I have no doubt whatever that it will still be involved in caring for the welfare of the people) and what can be done at the local level. And I don't think that will be a question of ideological adherence to one set of political dogmas or another: I think it will be very much a question of working out what is possible within the constraints of the economy and the ecology whatever time it is that we arrive at this ecological society."



Jonathon then raised the question of the solution to the problem of the redistribution of wealth, given the total unacceptability of the inequality of wealth we live with at present. I suggested that one anarchist proposal was that land should be redistributed so that everyone would have access to land, and that taxation should be levied on people free to dispose of their earnings as they wish. Was it possible, I asked him, to run a campaign on a programme of "cut taxes"? He admitted to "shuddering" at the range of taxes proposed in the Ecology Party manifesto, but in this kind of response to political demands he gave an indication of just how often the party is faced with coming up with genuinely radical solutions by the need to follow contemporary political and economic models.

"This, I suggested, has led many good greens in their first encounter with green thinking was that the Ecology Party to become disillusioned with it and eventually move on. His response to this was uncompromising:

"There's nothing wrong with that at all. The Ecology Party has always known that it is by definition a transitional organisation, by the acceptance of a paradox at its heart: namely that it is talking about politics of a completely different sort and doing that politics in the same way that other people do their politics. This is a paradox which all members of the Ecology Party are aware of and should be - and in accepting that paradox do not feel any sense of disappointment that they will eventually see through that paradox in such a way that they feel they have to find another way of expressing their political commitment. That is perfectly well and good, to my mind. But it should not be taken a stage further - as many people have done and used as an argument against the very existence of a party that to a certain extent is doing an educational job that no other part of the green movement is doing."

Two highly controversial subjects in the Ecology Party over recent years have been direct action and feminism. Porritt himself advocated direct action and also realised early on the contribution the feminist perspective had to make to green politics and practice. Were these two key areas not what distinguishes conventional 'green' politics from the truly radical 'green' position?

"Yes, I must admit to some disappointment



way the Ecology Party found it very difficult to take those aspects on board - and still does. I can't help feeling that perhaps that says something about the people who join the Ecology Party and what they expect of their party. What they are seeking in the party is perhaps something that I may disagree with. I think that the whole feminist perspective is crucially important. I think that the whole debate about direct action has always been, and to a certain extent still is, overdone. To my way of thinking direct action is an absolutely logical and integral part of any political stance, and to distinguish it as being fundamentally and qualitatively different from involvement in the electoral process was a very bad piece of political analysis: the two should be complementary, they shouldn't be mutually exclusive.

"I do wish the party was more involved in direct action to demonstrate its commitment to certain causes. I do believe though that this is not as important as the problem of infusing the whole organisation and ethos of the party with a feminist perspective. That I do think to be crucially important - and for the whole green movement, not just the Ecology Party. It's probably harder for a political party to take that on board because its structure often works against those values - as we've seen. Whether or not it is possible to have a political party that is feminist in perspective is a question that still has to be answered. I am very encouraged by the example of Die Grunen in that respect, because I believe that one of the things they have achieved is to bring into their politics a more open and explicit commitment to a feminist perspective. But is it possible to blend a feminist perspective and a conventional party political structure? I've got no answer to that, frankly. I suspect it's not."

Men have set up the political structures we have: perhaps it needs a women-only leadership for a while to get us out of the mess we are in? "I am not persuaded of that opinion" came the reply.

To be successful in a political party you have to be assertive and dominant and assertive. These are also the techniques of a successful public speaker. Isn't this kind of role - one on which Porritt is particularly successful and 'at home' himself - essentially quite anti-feminist? "When I say that I enjoy the whole cut-and-thrust of public meetings, that's one type of public meeting... But I'm finding more and more that the meetings I go to tend not to be of that kind. In the summer I went to a series of meetings, still quite large, but totally different in their nature. At a couple there was music at the same time, and there was none of that belligerent probing. There was very much a sharing of the ideas. Admittedly I was still there in a 'special capacity', making a presentation which everyone was asked to listen to. So yes, to a certain extent there was an element of old-fashioned politicking. But I felt more at home in those meetings than perhaps in the ones that are more conventional." He now asks how meetings are going to be organised, in the hope of being able to influence the pattern in advance.

"You can't be in this movement for long without being profoundly affected by it, and I obviously in my whole approach to politics have been profoundly affected by what I've experienced and by what I've begun to feel to be important. I wasn't a feminist of any description when I came into green politics: I wasn't hostile, but I was completely apathetic to the notion that there was a feminist perspective that mattered. That's been part of my learning, and it's been very important. And it's only because there's been such a lot of learning in me that I feel some justification sometimes for standing up and saying, this is a possible way we might develop things together, these are some lines of thought that are useful..."

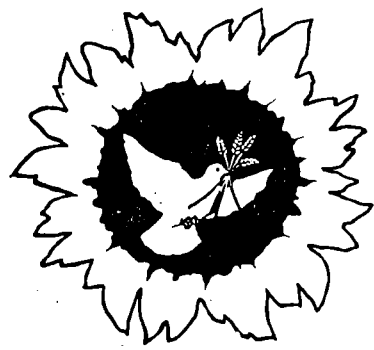


We turned to the Ecology Party's electoral aims. Isn't it time to broaden the party's aims, given for example the very small increase in membership experienced after the 1983 General Election? Here Jonathon was very anxious to define just what the Ecology Party sets out to be, and who it claims to represent - or not to represent:

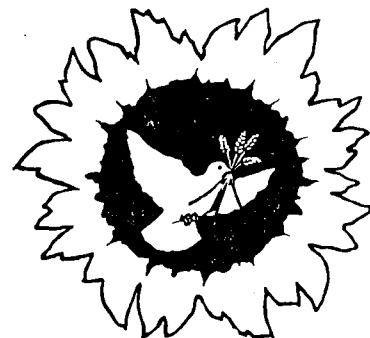
"There has been a residual confusion in the minds of some that the Ecology Party has aspired to represent the totality of the green movement, the green perspective. Now I know for a fact that it hasn't at any stage historically ever aspired to that role. Once it is accepted that we do not see ourselves in that catalytic, central or indeed all-embracing role, I think one can legitimately say that we do have a legitimate purpose as part and parcel of that movement; and our purpose is to take those particular concerns and that set of principles into the electoral process. For better or for worse, that is the role the Ecology Party has staked out for itself in the green movement. I think we have got to keep hammering away at that role. If we try to embrace a wider role we will indeed be open to the criticism that we're trying to become the green movement."

What, I asked, about the role of FoE? Typically opportunist, single-issue, environmentalist, very shy of any political philosophy and seemingly aloof from the green debate? Jonathon agreed that there are problems in welding a coherent position out of a series of single-issue campaigns, and regards his appointment as director of FoE precisely as an attempt to move towards a more consistent position. But aloof from the development of the green movement? No! "I've been genuinely impressed in my first week of the overall awareness of the people working in FoE of what is going on in the rest of the green movement, and very considerable commitment to a set of general principles which perhaps I hadn't anticipated. I hope that FoE will be fully involved in the political process of developing the green movement. I certainly intend that it should be. I take on board unhesitatingly the fact that FoE can never be a party-political organisation and have no intentions whatever of shifting from that stance. But I am equally convinced that FoE has to be a very high-profile political organisation, and that will involve very considerable levels of confrontation with people who at the moment are taking decisions."

INTERVIEWED BY
JON CARPENTER.



MOLESWORTH GREEN VILLAGE



MOLESWORTH IS a large, disused air base on the Cambridgeshire/Northamptonshire border. It is also the scheduled home for 64 American-controlled Cruise missiles. Under a US military construction programme funds became available on October 1st. The base is supposed to be operational by the end of 1986.

Molesworth air base is also the site of the newly founded Molesworth Green Village. The village has grown out of the very successful "Harvest for the Hungry" green gathering which was organised by the Green Collective and the Molesworth Wheat to the Starving Campaign.

Over the August Bank Holiday some 2,500 people (police estimate) squatted MoD land at Molesworth for an open-air and illegal green gathering. Some 70 of us are still here. The gathering itself was a great success: some 10 acres of land were ploughed up for winter wheat, the Bishop of Huntingdon came and dedicated a peace chapel on the base, and thousands of people participated in workshops, listened to bands, and enjoyed the theatre. The atmosphere generated provided a solid basis for a more permanent community.

The Strategic Importance of Molesworth

NATO plans to site 464 Cruise missiles at six bases in Europe. Only 32 have so far been deployed: 16 at Greenham Common and 16 at Comiso in Italy. The deployment programme is now facing a severe crisis of confidence: work at Florennes, the Belgian site, has been put back one year; the Dutch have postponed for 18 months their decision on deployment at Woensdrecht; and work at the West German site near Bitburg appears to have been put on the back burner at least until 1987. Molesworth is the odd one out. It is the only base where construction work is still going ahead.

Although US funds were scheduled to become available on October 1st, there is still considerable doubt as to whether they will be forthcoming. The US

Congress doubts Britain's will to proceed with construction - anticipating no doubt massive domestic opposition from CND and other peace groups.

So the European allies are wavering. America is wavering. The central test of NATO's will to proceed with the Cruise deployment programme now seems to rest in British hands. Molesworth could be the turning point! Clearly we have to mobilise in a massive way and demonstrate to the government that Molesworth will be the most difficult military construction project they have yet embarked on, and that opposition comes from right across the political spectrum.

Keeping Molesworth Green

Work on the perimeter fence could begin at any time. It's therefore very important that groups start visiting Molesworth and that we establish networks that can respond quickly when (and if) work does begin. We've now got the potential, if only we can mobilise it, to actually prevent them from putting that fence up.

The open spaces at Molesworth provide us with a unique opportunity to convert MoD land to peaceful, socially useful purposes, to campaign "for" something rather than just "against". To complement resistance campaigns, we hope Molesworth will become the focus for a Gandhian-style campaign to build an alternative to the culture and politics of violence.

The Green Village has now settled down and is preparing for a cold and windswept winter. One of our first priorities has been the establishment of regular lessons for the children. We've got some 15 to 20 children living at the village, aged between 1 and 14. The school is now half-way built and waiting for more building materials before it can be completed.

The principal focal point of the village is our communal kitchen. This runs on a donation basis and provides regular meals for many of the settlers and visitors. This kitchen has recently been moved to its winter site, and a bread-baking oven has been built in front of it. Although most of the village's energy is going into preparing itself for the winter, there are also a number of parallel campaigns running on the base.

The first of these is the Wheat to the Starving Campaign; the idea is to grow wheat on the base and then ship it out to the starving in Eritrea. The first shipment of donated and Molesworth-grown wheat will leave Molesworth on October 20 when hundreds are expected to help with the sowing of winter wheat.

The other major on-going campaign is "Eirene" (Greek for peace). Eirene is a peace chapel which is being built without planning permission on MoD property. We're now nearly ready to start work on the roof. All we need is the funds with which to buy thousands of roofing tiles.

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Other smaller projects are planned for the village, including a vegetable garden, a windmill, tree planting, and a number of craft nurseries which could generate funds for the village.

Unfortunately everything needs money to get started. We need the support of CND groups throughout the country to help finance all these projects and provide materials and practical support. If you can help us with money, we have three accounts: one specifically for the wheat called "Molesworth Wheat to the Starving", one specifically for the chapel called "Eirene", and a general account to provide support for all the projects and for the people living there called "Molesworth Green Village".

The vision of a green village will capture many imaginations, but we mustn't underplay the real difficulties of starting at the beginning of winter.

The village is on one of the highest points in Cambridgeshire, it's on a wet, clay soil, and it's very exposed. We have virtually no money and only a small hardcore of people. We urgently need active and constructive people to join us. Remember, if we stop Cruise at Molesworth - and we really can - the whole European ground-launched deployment programme will be halted.

Please help us in any way you can. Visit us, stay if you can, and please send what you can afford to:

Molesworth Green Village, Peace Corner, Old Weston Road, Brington, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE17 5SE.
(Phone 0480 63054).

David Taylor.

** A collection for the Green Village made at the Ecology Party annual conference raised £360 - that's an average of more than £1 a head! The conference also passed a motion requesting the Party Council to make up to £400 available to the village for the construction of an office.

1985: Molesworth Year

A THOUSAND people went to Molesworth on the bright and very blustery Saturday of October 20. Wheat grown on the base during the summer was packed up, along with other donated food, and despatched by lorry for Eritrea - to make the point that land should be used for life-giving food and not for instruments of death. In a moving display of communal agriculture, hundreds of people sowed new winter wheat on a newly ploughed field - grain which will be harvested in the spring. Musicians circled among the workers.

Trees were planted in memory of Caroline Taylor. Then there was a commemoration of her life in the intimate, roofless, tiny peaceful chapel 'Eirene'. Tears, anguish and mourning; thanks for her life and the inspiration it gave; a rainbow love-knot in the hands of Lucy...

Lengthening shadows and candles lit in the Rainbow Cafe. Is this a Green Village, or winter quarters for a group of travellers, or both? The leaflet in my hand expressed a warm welcome "from the people of the Green Rainbow Peace Village". This is early days in the formation of new community - different people with different expectations, some coloured green and others rainbow. It's an experiment which must succeed, and one in which we can all take part.

Bleak and windswept but protected in part by massive and ancient hedges, the site may well stay outside the perimeter fence of the newly enclosed base. You are very aware when there that this is new terrain: part of the Midlands and edging up against East Anglia, a very different focus from Greenham Common a hundred miles away. Next year it's all going to be happening here. 1985 is Molesworth Year, make or break. Don't let it break...

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Capra's Green Politics

GREEN POLITICS: The Global Promise. Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak. Hutchinson, £10.95.

"Green Politics" is the first serious attempt to examine, describe and analyse the phenomenon of green politics that has developed principally in Europe over the last decade, and as such its publication is an important event for the green movement. The book examines in detail the development of the West German greens, and to a lesser extent that of the other green parties in Europe, New Zealand, etc., and endeavours to draw conclusions about the essential nature of green politics, what it stands for, and how successful it is by its own standards in projecting its own ideas. Both authors are quite well known in the USA and the book was originally published in America for an American audience.

The central element of the book is an examination of the West German green party, Die Grünen, its leaders, the political climate that led to its development, its detailed policies and its internal dynamics. The authors do an excellent job of describing the development of the German greens and of their present policies. This is undoubtedly the best exposition in English of the German greens' political position in all its important elements.

It is in the analysis of these positions, and the methods by which Die Grünen came about them, that I have severe reservations with this book. The analysis is, to be blunt, simplistic and chauvinist. It would seem that even well-informed American intellectuals such as the two authors equate the terms socialism and marxism (which they happily conflate with comments like "socialism, that is democratic marxism" - p.35) with something akin to child molesting. As they concentrate at obsessive length on the "Marxist-oriented green faction" in Die Grünen, the analysis of the internal dynamics of Die Grünen is seriously flawed. Their simplistic approach may appeal to American college students, but it won't do for readers of Green Line. One of the main problems is that they are so hostile to the marxist tradition in European intellectual thought that they are so busy rubbishing what they think people say that they don't bother to listen to what they actually say. For instance they comment on p.25 that:

"It is the marxist-oriented greens' tradition, and fondness for conflict politics ... that is objectionable to other greens... The marxist-oriented faction does not indicate any desire to change this orientation."

Yet on the facing page, in an interview, a leading "marxist green", Rainer Trampert, says:

"Some greens say unions are part of the industrial bloc and therefore adversaries. Others like us say that if we want to avoid a permanent social schism we must find a convergence. This means we also have to enter the unions and work within them."

This tendency to re-write what people say seems to come from a deeply chauvinist attitude towards the cultural values of foreigners (i.e., us). Thus

Die Grünen seems to have drawn its policies, practice and inspiration from a number of sources including the American peace movement, civil rights movement, counter-culture, etc., and from various cultural and historical strands to be found in European politics including anarchism, socialism, marxism, and libertarianism, as well as anthroposophy, Ghandism, and Buddhist thought. What the authors do consciously or otherwise is continually stress the significance, important contribution and sensibleness of American traditions, while at the same time conflating and marginalising the European political traditions.

Use of language, as feminists in particular are very conscious, is extremely revealing, and certain groups are given special linguistic treatment in this book. Thus while nice greens get themselves elected to positions in the party, the "marxists" "manoeuvre themselves"; nice greens have their ideas approved, marxists "push through" their programmes, etc. This attitude suffuses the entire book and is extremely tiresome.

Nevertheless the authors make a lot of important points both about the greens and about the political context in which we all live. Their evaluation of the first four years of Die Grünen has an excellent section on "process" in politics (what the women's movement refers to as the personal being political) graphically illustrating the problems of dealing with "process" and making it an integral part of the practice of politics. Equally effective is the authors' debunking of a certain amount of wishful thinking amongst some greens. For example there is a tendency for people to believe that because decentralisation is a "good thing" and they "know somebody who has recently moved to the country", that it is happening. The centralisation of the control of capital in the hands of a few massive corporations, particularly as public assets are sold off at knock-down prices, the interference with local government by its partial abolition and by the introduction of rate-capping on the rest, are but two examples of the opposing tendency in Britain. Capra and Spretnak trenchantly itemise the "false decentralism" of Reagan where \$260 billion has been taken in 1984 alone to finance the defence budget and only a tiny amount is returned to the states.

So what can we in Britain learn from this book and the political developments it portrays? Rightly it only gives specific suggestions and recommendations of what should happen in the US to advance green ideas. The lessons we can learn must be drawn from the comprehensive descriptions it provides of what is happening in Germany. Sensibly it doesn't try to provide us with answers. Neither the authors nor Die Grünen can do that. What this book provides us with is a lot of material on how to approach the whole field of green politics and what questions to ask. The example of Die Grünen can act as a light and as an inspiration, but the British path to Ecotopia is bound to be unique.

Martin Stott

War in the Future

FUTURE WAR: Armed Conflict in the Next Decade.
 Edited by Frank Barnaby. Michael Joseph, £9.95.

THIS BOOK looks at first glance like a cross between something intended for the coffee table and a Boy's Own bumper annual. Full of technicolour photos of the latest in streamlined fighter jets, surface to air missiles and general electronic whizzkiddery, it's enough to make the average green turn tail and run a mile!

But hang on before you do! It's edited and in fact two-thirds written by Frank Barnaby, the former nuclear physicist who in recent years has spent all his talent and energy informing the public of what we're letting ourselves in for unless we do something to stop it. As such, "Future War" is very much his guidebook to the apparatus, technologies and to a lesser extent political systems which are taking us down the slope to planetary armageddon. It has been put together in an engaging way which makes the "spiders web" (his term) of developing military technologies almost understandable to the non-specialist reader with a format of linked chapters which at the end at least leave one feeling that one has got an overview of what is going on and perhaps what ought to be some of the future emphases for peace campaigning. Certainly for Barnaby the key worry areas - at least in the short and medium term - seem to be threefold. The rapid advance of "stealth" technology which is drastically cutting back the "opposition's" available time in which to respond, is one. Cruise missiles represent part of the first generation of this trend which, argues Baranaby, is undoubtedly fuelling the race towards some sort of first-strike capability.

Linked to this is his concern about developments on - or rather beneath - the high seas. Anti-submarine warfare (ASW) is now reaching a stage of sophistication which leaves formerly almost undetectable nuclear-missile-carrying submarines easy targets - in other words jeopardising the crazy balance of assured nuclear retaliation (you know, M.A.D.) which up to now has in military terms anyway prevented anyone from daring to push the button. Barnaby in this context does not fail to omit that increasing competition for "new economic zones" in the form of chunks of ocean bottom (a competition which is and will be fought as aggressively between developing countries as between the superpowers) is helping to undermine any fragile sense of world order or security.

Thirdly - and this is one of his strongest chapters - Barnaby shows how the proliferation of "peaceful" nuclear technology and materials is making nuclear bomb production on a global scale an imminent prospect. And he goes on to warn that if, for instance, Israel or South Africa were simply to threaten to use the bomb, this would be sufficient

to force the intervention of the United States - thus probably sparking off final world obliteration.

To draw back from such a bleak prospect and have something positive to say about the future is not easy, though some guys in the US "National Command Authority" certainly seem to have their future staked out. It is to ensure that from their "airborne command posts" that after more or less everything including their control and command posts have been destroyed on the ground, the US for one will be able to go on fighting. This optimism based on the belief that "Victory is possible" and that the US can recover from a nuclear war is probably the most horrifying instance and depressing insight of this book.

Barnaby however does draw comfort and some degree of optimism from the very complexity of the new generations of technological weaponry. The sheer amount of data which is fed in by the computers of the latest F-16's, for instance, is enough to place an intolerable strain on all but the most superhuman of pilots. The fact moreover that the plane's electronic gadgetry leads to some sort of breakdown on average every few minutes only underlines Barnaby's contention that the technological fix of modern warfare has become less an asset and more a liability. Add to this the astronomic cost of research, development and production, and the ability to wage "modern" war is fast becoming untenable.

Barnaby does however reckon that the electronic revolution does favour the side that puts its money into non-provocative defence rather than offence. Cheap, remotely piloted aircraft and ground sensors for surveillance, and a near-automated battlefield primarily of missiles and precision-guided munitions (PGMs), are he argues both a credible deterrent and sufficiently cheap to produce. One will recognise in this the kernel of the "Just Defence" ideas developed by him jointly with Stan Windass. They are a far cry from the nonviolent social resistance proposals of many greens, and will excite controversy and debate both within green politics and in a great many other circles.

Even without reference to the doctrine of "airland battle" and the effects of the nuclear winter, information on which was presumably unavailable when this book was compiled, "Future War" is nevertheless an excellent introduction to the prospects for conventional and nuclear war. At £9.95 it may be expensive to buy; so order it for your local library. Who knows: some unsuspecting militarist may read it and end up being converted!

Mark Levene

Jonathon Porritt
 "Seeing Green"

£3.95 post free

EOA Books

34 Cowley Road Oxford

Gandhi

I read Geoffrey Ostergaard's piece on Gandhians (GL 26) and found a number of things which do not seem to tally with my experience of India, where I lived from October 1981 to January 1983.

It is not correct to describe the Congress Party or any other political parties in India as "political Gandhians". The structure, ideology and practice of the Congress is essentially similar to European social democratic parties. This is because of Nehru in particular, who was an enthusiast for democratic socialism and economic planning on the Russian model. The centralised top-down planning still in use in India today would not have been accepted by Gandhi, nor would he have recognised his ideas in the very low priority given to rural development in the Plans. Since most other political parties in India arise out of the Congress Party, it is not surprising that they too share the social democratic vision of centralised planning. There was almost no difference between the economic plans of the Janata alliance 1977-80 when in government and the Congress plans which had preceded it in power. The professions of following Gandhi uttered by many Indian politicians should be recognised for the appeal to be identified with him that they are - just as politicians here aspire to inherit the mantle of Churchill.

Overtly Gandhian organisations in India are very small and not influential. I think we tend to assume that Gandhi had an enormous following and that this meant his ideas permeated deep into the culture of India. It is probably more accurate to recognise that Indian nationalism had an enormous following and that the perceived leaders of the movement for independence were accordingly given high status. Much of Nehru's and Gandhi's work was on paper - newspaper articles notably. These only reached the literate - still only about a third of the Indian population today. Also, most nonviolence in India is of the passive variety - something that was as true in Gandhi's day as it is now. Gandhi often had occasion to write bemoaning this fact.

What is significant, and not mentioned in Geoffrey's piece, is that Gandhi's economic ideas are being re-examined. The Indian Economic Plans promote growth in the formal economy, sometimes in areas where it is needed, but the rising numbers of the landless and unemployed signal the failure of the Plans to penetrate into the villages - where 80% of the people live. The Government has provided electricity to the villages, schools, telephones, sometimes TV as well as the propaganda of Government-controlled All India Radio: it has failed to provide clean water, basic sanitation, a consistent quality of health care, or an end to the crushing rule of landlords and moneylenders.

Slowly, there seems to be a recognition that Gandhi might have been right about starting development at village level. There is some hope that the opposition parties, fretting under the burgeoning authoritarianism of Mrs Gandhi, would actually try to decentralise the economy and make fundamental changes in economic plans. Whether they can achieve a majority to do this in the Indian parliament is debatable. Whether the Gandhian influences in the opposition will be able to secure a turn away from past practice cannot be foreseen; the opposition parties remain dominated by former Congress Party cabinet ministers.

In short, I think the situation is a little more hopeful than Geoffrey Ostergaard has suggested and that some change within the system of government operating in India today is still possible. Gandhi was not an anarchist - he participated in the Congress Party to achieve power to decentralise many though not all sectors of Indian economic and political decision-making. Those most faithful to Gandhi's personal political practice are to be found amongst Indian opposition parties today, placing the emphasis on Sarvodaya - working for the welfare of all - rather than Satyagraha - confronting authority by direct action, which seems to make little impression on the vast unresponsive bureaucratic elite governing the Indian republic.

Steve Dawe
12 Clyde Street, Canterbury, Kent





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Environmental or Green?

Joe Weston, reporting on the campaign against the M40 in GL26, seems to be upset by the ideological untidiness of the "environmental" movement. He thinks the mixing of "socialist principles" with "middle class values" has actually "confounded the growth of an environmental movement in Britain". If only, he believes, we can all agree on where "environmentalism" stands on the conventional left-right ideological spectrum, all will be well.

So long as we think of the green movement as environmentalism, problems like this will still seem to be relevant. The concept of the environment is a human-chauvinistic one. It sees all the non-human beings on Earth in terms of their contribution to human happiness.

The green consciousness, often

called ecology, is not human-centred but Earth-centred. It allows all beings an equal right to exist and flourish. But it also warns that we humans deny our fellow creatures this right at our peril - terminal peril.

The contrast between these two world-views is fundamental.

Green consciousness does not come from changing our organisation or holding summit meetings. It comes from the heart. Once we have discovered it we must first of all live by it ourselves, and secondly communicate it to others. Compared to this the struggles of the class war have a very low priority indeed: you can't build a socialist heaven on a dead planet.

Patrick Whitefield
The White Field, c/o The Dove
Butleigh, Glastonbury, Somerset

Hold Back!

While agreeing with the sentiments expressed on the issue of wholefood diet v. Third World exploitation and expectations (GL26, p.20), at this point in time pressurising the local wholefood shop into revealing its sources and their *raison d'être* is not one of the answers. I'm sure most of these shopkeepers, like myself, are only too aware of the connotations of their purchases, but are either in blissful ignorance or operate small discriminations such as boycotting South African produce (as do many wholesalers).

But we are faced with a many-tiered cycle before the foods reach us. The Afghan fruit crop is probably a major export: should we help finance their struggle, or are we just propping up the Soviet régime?

Until the majority are converted to a wholefood/vegetarian diet, then our priorities will remain price/quality/availability, and endeavouring to discuss the other matters with our customers. I'm not sure that a lone British Field Bean diet would be entirely popular.

Anny Squire
90 Parkhill Road, Birmingham 17

Battling Inside and Out

I wonder if one of the reasons for the alleged marking time and lack of impact of the Ecology Party (Penny Newsome, letters GL26) may well be the attitudes and actions of people like Penny Newsome?

Her viewpoint strikes me as being entirely selfish, and she seems to look upon the green movement as one out of which she expects to get something, not one into which she considers putting anything. Her lack of support by withdrawal of subscription and membership, then the same betrayal again because of so minor a thing as the physical form of the activists' mailing, seems petty in the extreme. How does she expect, if she is in any way typical, that the Party could forge ahead under these circumstances? Where does she think the money comes from to produce what she obviously wants, a better printed and professional mailing? She is lucky that others have far more stickability, or there would be no Ecology Party for her to flit in and out of.

As to the content of the mailing - resolutions to change the wording of parts of the Manifesto - that depends entirely upon the individual membership; and if resolutions such as this are put, they have to be accepted. Are we not democratic? If you don't like it, Penny, join (again!) and come to conference and pour scorn on it from there, not


from the sidelines. Are others always to be the ones upon whom the charges fall? Are others to be "the people around capable of making the breakthrough"? - while Penny Newsome opts out in disillusion?

It must have been particularly galling for Paul Thatcher and the volunteers at Clapham Road to read in what contempt she holds the "hastily stencilled" activists' mailing. "Hastily"? Labouring over sheets and sheets of matter, typing or arranging to get types so many detailed pages, and then to duplicate 1,000 copies of each, is exhausting; and much of it is carried out by London members keeping the office going in their spare time often after a day's work. I myself gave up my one and only whole day off nearly every week for three years to handle membership, and I can assure Penny that I felt as thoroughly part of a living green movement - and in my work for the branch, battling against far greater odds than amongst like-minded people round the camp fires as she did at Molesworth (lucky her, I was working and couldn't go!).

Yes, long live the greens - particularly those who have doggedly stuck to it for years battling not only with those outside, but with the nit-pickers on the inside.

Cynthia Warth
6 Fairlight Avenue
Woodford Green, Essex IG8 9JP

HOUSMANS PEACE DIARY 1985



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Eco-Action in Bridlington

ECO-ACTION is a voluntary group of people in Bridlington undertaking practical work in environmental education. They have produced an information sheet for schools on paper recycling. A hen and her chicks, taken from a local organic smallholding, are loaned to local schools for the day: this has proved very successful, and has led to visits by children to the smallholding, where grants from the MSC and the local council have enabled work to be done to improve safety and access, and to provide information boards. Other improvements have been carried out with finance from the Countryside Commission.

This month Eco-Action launch their next project - a tree/shrub bank where people can 'deposit' unwanted shrubs and saplings, or 'withdraw' them for community planting schemes. Eco-Action will also grow its own trees from seed, and encourage local schools to do the same.

Eco-Action co-ordinator is Bill Shaw, Field House, Bessingby, Bridlington YO16 4UH (0262 603593).

Urban Peace Camps

ONE INITIATIVE strongly supported at workshops at the Molesworth Gathering was the setting up of urban peace camps. It is proposed that camps should be set up in as many urban centres as possible in the first week of January - with the common theme "A new year's resolution: living peace".

Because of their locations, such camps could communicate direct with the public instead of having to rely largely on media coverage. If not permanent, camps could be set up each weekend.

Contact: Caroline Clarke, 123 Argyle Street, Norwich.

Campaign Packs

THE YOUNG Liberal Ecology Group has just produced its second campaign pack, on nuclear power. As well as campaign advice and background information, it contains posters (one of them published by the GLC!), a badge, and a useful collection of graphics, slogans and cartoons for enlivening local leaflets. 75p post free from YL Ecology Group, c/o Youth Office, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE.

An earlier pack was on acid rain. The next is to be on cycling.

Nitrate Pollution Report

NITRATE POLLUTION in water is the subject of an extremely informative report produced by Southend and District Ecology Party. The report is a comprehensive summary of the position as regards nitrate pollution in the UK, and of the EEC legislation which the government is trying to duck. A shortened version of the report will appear in GL shortly: meanwhile, copies are available for £1.50 from: Southend & District Ecology Party, c/o 11 Durlley Close, South Benfleet, Essex.

Biofarming Register

THE BIOFARMING Register is a source list of qualified teachers, writers, researchers, technicians and consultants in the fields of biological agriculture, horticulture and agro-forestry. It is being compiled by Anthony Wiggins at Country College.

Anyone wanting to be included should write to Anthony Wiggins, Country College, 10 Hamilton Road, Alford, Lincs. LN13 9HD, enclosing a sae and a brief outline of their qualifications and interests.

Country College is an agency formed in 1977 to promote sustainable lifestyles. It now operates primarily as a correspondence college

ECOLOGY PARTY

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR THE FOLLOWING POSTS

Campaigns Director and Press Secretary

Office Manager

(It is envisaged that this work will be carried out in London)

Local Party Support and Development Worker
(This post will not necessarily be London based)

Salaries for all the above will be £5000/annum

Applicants need not apply for a full post - appropriate proposals for work sharing will be sympathetically considered.

For full job descriptions for all the above please write to Heather Swailes 22, Bond Court, Hillside Road, Harpenden, Herts.

Closing date: Monday December 17th.

Illegal War

THE MASS destruction implicit in nuclear warfare is illegal under a number of international laws. A small pamphlet which sets out the arguments very cogently, with quotes from relevant conventions and protocols, is available for 20p (£10 for 100) from 1984 Law Against War, 90 Gladstone Street, Bedford (phone Bedford 62558). Cheques payable to 'Inlaw', please.

Warming Summit

A ONE-DAY conference on the environment is to be held by the 'Summit' nations at ministerial level on December 17 (venue not known). This is probably as a result of the call by the US Environmental Protection Agency last October to discuss the warming up of the atmosphere which, it said, would threaten European food production in the '90s

Eco's Youth Campaign

THE ECOLOGY Party has just launched a youth campaign. The Young Ecologists ("YES") is described by its co-ordinator Andrew Hill as a league of under-21 green groups in Britain. YES has a monthly newsletter (£2 p.a.) and a campaigns pack giving all the information necessary to set up a local Young Ecologists group. Speakers (with films) are also available on work, acid rain, green peace, nuclear weapons and nuclear power. Contact: Andrew Hill, YES, 36/38 Clapham Road, London SW9 0JQ (01-739 2485).

Canal Boats Work Again

RESTORING CANAL boats to working order, and then undertaking freight and passenger work, needs money and a great deal of practical help. Chris Leah is trying to get a scheme off the ground, and has a boat in mind. Write to him (sae, please) at 7 Railway Cottages, Hardy Road, Norwich.

Student Green Groups

THE STUDENT Green Network is a network of autonomous green groups in colleges in the UK. Newsletter subscription is £1 for 2 issues to David Ford, 81 Heath Road, Bradford, W Yorks BD3 9PJ (£1 notes, not cheques). National contact is Robin Wiles, 13 King Street, Cross Heath, Newcastle-u-Lyme, Staffs ST5 9HQ. (Mail to his old address may not have reached him).

Recent additions to the network include:

Aston Univ (TW1). Penny Rea, A.U., Costa Green, Birmingham B4 7ET.

Leeds University Green Group. Martin Sutherland is now at 21 Pearson Terrace, Leeds 6.

Leicester Univ, LEAF, Gill Haigh. SU Building (Percy Gee), Univ of Leicester, Univ Rd LE1 7RH.

Reading Univ Green Group, SU, Whiteknights, Reading, Berks.

Plymouth Poly. Mick Ruhland, 17 Holborn St, Coltesdown, Plymouth.

Glasgow Univ Green Group. Sandie Miller, 38 Kessington Road, Bearsdon, Glasgow.

Sunderland Poly Green Group. Karl Peterman, Flat 3/5 Gray Road,

Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 9HA.

Copies of the full list available for a sae from Mark Kinzley, 7 Gaysham Ave., Gants Hill, Ilford, Essex IG2 6TH.

New Green Groups

Lichfield and Tamworth Green Group: Russ (Lichfield 24707).

Tamworth Ecology Party: Jacquie Faulknall, 3 Moorgate, The Leys, Tamworth (51321).

Lichfield Ecology Party: Nick Harvey, 9 Charnwood Close, Lichfield.

Sacred Principles

THE SCHUMACHER Lectures for 1984 will be given by Keith Critchlow, Helena Norburg-Hodge, and Dr A T Ariyaratne on Saturday November 10 from 2 to 7 pm at Bristol University Union, Queen's Road, Clifton, Bristol. Tickets are £6 (OAPs, students and unwaged £4). The theme is "Sacred Principles" - to be found in architecture or economics, development in the third world or progress in industrial society, in a quest for a spiritual dimension to the search for well-being today.

Greens Support the Miners

from page 3

commercial interests of the NCB, any more than it can with the interests of the NUM. The Government has failed to represent the interests of the people it is elected and paid to represent.

It has even failed politically. It misjudged the resistance it would encounter. It does not know its people, the fears they have for the future and the resistance (violent or otherwise) they would put up. Mining is a hard life producing hard people; the kind Mrs Thatcher does not know exist.

How can we justify aligning ourselves, however reservedly, with the "men of violence"? We haven't. Our statement points out in true ecological fashion that the violence has a cause which must be identified. To say nothing because of the violence is to be censored by it. We have offered what we believe to be the best choice for the miners: nonviolent direct action.

On the more technical aspects of the issue: we have rejected the NCB's view (not unexpectedly). Nor have we fallen into the "never close a pit" trap of Scargill. What we have said is that the decision when to close pits should take into account all the factors, all the costs to society as a whole. That kind of accounting is beyond the scope of the NCB

to accept; it requires political judgement - which is why the Government's silence has been so tragic.

Of extreme importance to us all is the change that is sweeping through the policing system in this country. And I don't only mean the military-style clothing, or the increasingly well-armoured vehicles. The monitoring of people, the twisting of laws and the politicising of the police are a threat to us all. Of course many of the changes can be "justified" by the increasing violence; but if at the same time these changes themselves contribute towards violent responses then they are self-defeating and threaten all our liberties.

What is required now is for the Ecology Party, and all other organisations interested in the energy question, to work their hardest to see that a resolution (should there be one) of the dispute is not based on "victory" or "defeat" but on the adoption of an energy strategy which places a correct value on the clean, efficient use of coal and on its extraction in a way that yields the maximum quantity spread over the longest period. Of nuclear power must be attacked: it's highly relevant in determining energy policy.

Finally, we must continue to attack the politics and politicians who would casually abandon whole communities to decades of despair in the cause of monetarism. Stand by with the candles!

Agricrisis



MOST OF US do not concern ourselves very much with agriculture. Food is always readily available in the shops; and the countryside is regarded as an amenity for picnics and Sunday walks. Modern agricultural techniques are rarely called into question, and the public is often unaware of the damage they cause to health, society and the environment. Unaware, too, that there is a viable alternative.

This involves mixed, small-scale organic farming which is not dependent on chemical fertilisers or artificial pesticides. Organic methods integrate cultivation with conservation, and provide varied and responsible employment. The organic movement is a practical response to the increasingly obvious dangers and paradoxes of modern agriculture.

First in a series of notes on food, health and the land by OONA MURPHY.

Today's farming techniques

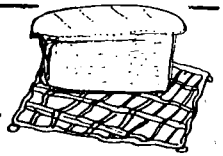
- + degrade the soil on which we depend
- + are wasteful of organic manure and compost
- + are dependent on expensive and exhaustible mineral resources
- + provide us with poor quality produce of low nutritional value
- + are poisoning the water table through the use of soluble nitrates
- + involve the use of highly toxic cancer-producing pesticides
- + are destroying the rural landscape and threatening wildlife
- + are resulting in the depopulation of the countryside and the decline of rural communities.

Since the second world war the face of British farming has been revolutionised. Crop yields have increased 100%, the average farm size has doubled, and the number of farms and farm workers has been reduced by more than half. These figures reflect profound structural changes on the farm brought about by technological breakthroughs and the government programme for the "rationalisation" of agriculture.

Technological developments have meant the intensive chemicalisation and mechanisation of farm production contributing to increased output and reduced labour requirements. "Rationalisation" has effectively meant squeezing the so-called inefficient small farmer off the market and increasing the profitability of large farms. Farming is now a large-scale industry in which criteria of profitability tend to prevail over some of the most basic duties of an agricultural system, the most fundamental being to care for the soil - the farmer's means of production.

DON'T FORGET the chestnuts! Out in the woods sweet chestnuts are waiting all month to be picked up, taken home and roasted (slit them first, then roast in the embers of an open fire, or on a tray in a hot oven (450°) for 8 minutes or so).

This month's recipe Sourdough Bread



People have been baking bread since long before the neat little packets of dried yeast came from the breweries. The bacteria in the air is all that is needed to make a loaf rise.

I began using this method out of necessity as I never seemed to have any suitable yeast in the larder whenever I wanted to bake; and I found that it is possibly one of the most satisfying loaves to make. It tastes delicious, contains trace elements not found in yeast bread, is economical and keeps for ages!

Method. (Remember to keep everything warm, particularly in winter. Experiment with temperatures.)

Day 1 Put 1 cup of flour and one of warm water into a bowl. Stir well, cover, and leave in room temperature.

Day 2 Stir.

Day 3 Add another cupful each of flour and water to the mixture. Stir well.

Day 4 a.m. Stir: it should be smelling quite sour by now.

p.m. Put about 2lbs in a large bowl. Add a generous pinch of salt, and a pinch of caraway seeds (optional). Stir in the sour mixture, some oil and enough warm water to make a good firm dough. Knead thoroughly and cheerfully for about 10 minutes. Put into warm, well-greased tins - about 2/3 full. Cover with a warm damp cloth, and if possible put the tins in a large polybag and seal up. Leave overnight.

Day 5 Remove from polybag and place above the oven while it is heating to 200°C. Bake in the usual way for about 40 mins. The outside gets crisper than usual.

I always use sprouted wheat for extra flavour and nutrition. It's very simple. Start by soaking one or two cupfuls in water on day 1. Leave overnight. Drain and rinse through twice daily. Add to the dough when you start kneading: the grains will be soft and just beginning to sprout. Also experiment with different types of flour: it is very good made with rye flour. This bread can be sliced more thinly than usual, and when really old it's marvellous toasted!

Celia Wyndham

Christmas Recipes wanted!

WILL YOU be following the millions with a turkey on the Christmas table, or do you have a more wholesome alternative in mind? Share your ideas for Christmas foods in the next issue of Green Line, and help others get away from the traditional unecological fare!