

GREEN LINE

MAGAZINE OF THE GREEN MOVEMENT

30 p.

DAVID BLUNKETT:
To rebuild Sheffield

SUSAN GRIFFIN:
Ideologies of Madness

No. 21 APRIL '84



WELCOME TO GREEN LINE!

We are one part of a diverse but converging movement, independent of any one group or organisation: writers and readers alike share the discovery of what is in essence "green", and what brings them together.

GREEN LINE

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Readers who want an introduction to the green perspective could start with "Embrace the Earth", the new pamphlet just produced by Green CND and available from Green Line price 90p.

We're extending the range of literature we sell - see the back cover. This should be of service to individual readers as well as to people running bookstalls. If you have a pamphlet you'd like us to stock, send us a sample to look at.

Thanks to the advertising in this issue, we should be able to keep to 20 pages throughout the summer. (When we first started GL we could only afford 12 pages!). Our rates are very low, and we have a special deal for groups. If we might be able to help, give us a ring.

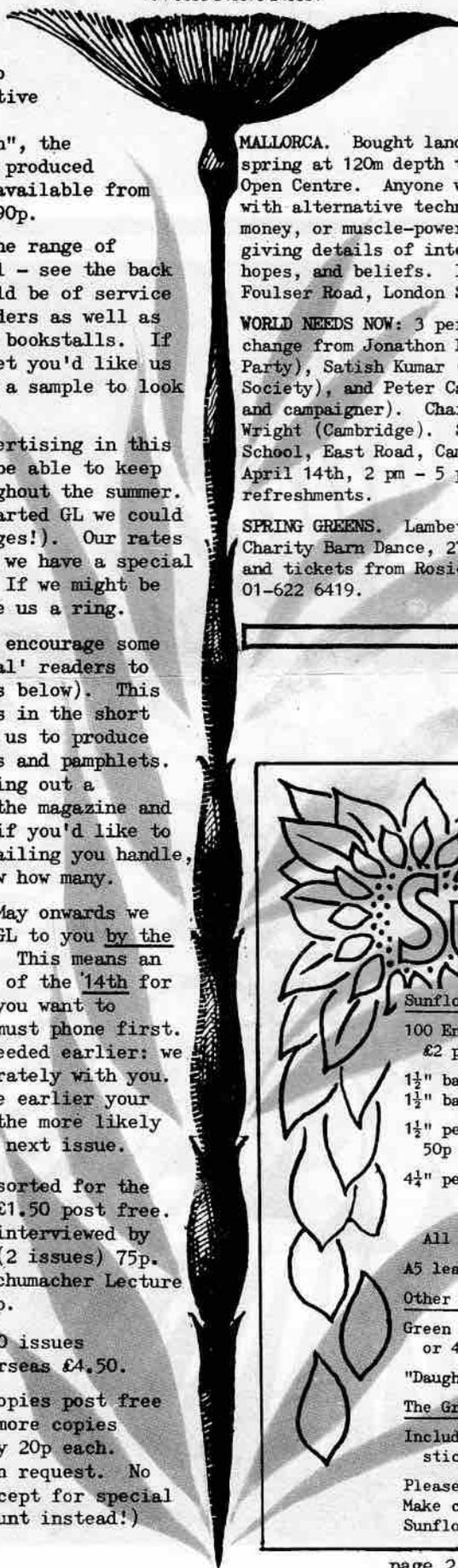
We'd also like to encourage some more of our 'casual' readers to subscribe (details below). This brings us in funds in the short term, and enables us to produce more badges, cards and pamphlets. We're about to bring out a leaflet plugging the magazine and the merchandise: if you'd like to have some for a mailing you handle, please let us know how many.

DEADLINES: From May onwards we shall try to get GL to you by the 1st of the month. This means an absolute deadline of the 14th for all material: if you want to exceed this, you must phone first. Articles may be needed earlier: we discuss this separately with you. But as always: the earlier your copy reaches us, the more likely it is to make the next issue.

BACK ISSUES: 6 assorted for the special price of £1.50 post free. Raymond Williams interviewed by Jonathon Porritt (2 issues) 75p. Susan Griffin's Schumacher Lecture part 1 (GL 20) 40p.

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WORLD NEEDS NOW: 3 personal views of change from Jonathon Porritt (Ecology Party), Satish Kumar (Schumacher Society), and Peter Cadogan (historian and campaigner). Chair: Margaret Wright (Cambridge). St Matthews School, East Road, Cambridge. Saturday April 14th, 2 pm - 5 pm. Creche and refreshments.

SPRING GREENS. Lambeth Ecology Charity Barn Dance, 27 April. Details and tickets from Rosie Daley, phone 01-622 6419.

Small Ads

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REBUILD SHEFFIELD

DAVID BLUNKETT TALKS TO ROLAND CLARKE

Roland Clarke visited Sheffield recently and spoke to David Blunkett, leader of Sheffield City Council, and to a number of local greens. Here is his report.

IF THERE'S anywhere in the country where green ideas could be fused with red, it's Sheffield where the 'progressives' in the Labour-controlled council are trying to make a break from 'paternalism' and initiate "collective community politics".

Almost continuously controlled by Labour since the 1926 General Strike, Sheffield was heavily industrialised in the last century and employment has always revolved around the steel industry. But with the recession the city has suffered extensive redundancies, mainly in the steel industry, and unemployment has trebled since 1979. One in every seven people are out of work, with the worst hit being women, older people, ethnic minorities, and the 10,000 young unemployed.

The situation has been magnified by the Tories' measures to reduce local government spending. Sheffield is one of the few local authorities which have refused to reduce spending by cutting services and sacking staff, and instead has begun a campaign to win support for the maintenance of services, though rates have risen nearly 80% over the last few years.

At the forefront of this fight to save jobs and services is the 36-year-old leader of the city council, David Blunkett, who was first elected to the council 13 years ago. Along with a dozen or so young Labour Party councillors, he has over this period changed the direction of the council. By the time he was elected leader in May 1980, a more open style of working that aimed to involve the workforce and ordinary people much more, was beginning to unfold.

When I talked to him about the consequences of the Tory legislation, he pointed out that "if we would implement either of the targets that the Government has given us, in Sheffield we would be talking about tens of millions of pounds and thousands of jobs; one way or another, either by not filling vacancies or allowing posts to lapse, or literally by sacking

people." The Council is now the biggest employer with 31,000 employees - over twice as many as the steel industry. The knock-on effect of cuts would be extensive! "Because we spend 80% of our cash on education and social services, (the cuts) would be heavily eating into those areas of essential work, which would also be eliminating all the important areas which have perhaps been neglected over the years, which are now being tackled - innovations and ideas, the areas which affect the quality of life of the community, not just basic statutory needs... It's the inner city areas, the people who are most deprived, the folks who haven't got all the shout and the political clout, that get it."

REBUILDING ON THE RATES

The spending on such areas as social services is high, but then the problems are in many areas appalling and the money goes where the benefit is felt. Most greens, reds, and the odd non-political type feel the services are good, visible, and should be supported. General opposition is muted and there is a grudging respect for the council. I was even told that 'rabid' Tories admit that though they feel that the Labour Party nationally is rubbish, in Sheffield they've done a good job.

Subsidising transport

Perhaps the most visible and popular policy is South Yorkshire Metropolitan County's public transport scheme, initiated by Sheffield city and county councillors. Heavily subsidised by the Met. County, the bus fares in South Yorkshire have not changed since 1975/76: it costs 7p from the edge of Sheffield to the city centre! According to a study done by the Transport Studies Unit of Oxford University (Feb. '83) there has been "a 3% increase in the number of bus passengers (after allowing for the acquisition of some independent operators) over a period when passengers declined by 23% in the rest of the country."



The cost of maintaining services, especially since the government cut central funds and imposed penalties for over-spending, is causing murmurings of discontent. Some people feel that the rates are to blame for the failure of businesses, and of new industry to locate in the city, but this ignores the economic climate and the fact that rates total less than 2% of sales income.

The greens must be wary of opposing the council over rates, because they offer an ideal opportunity to press for alternative means of local government funding. The Labour Party were reluctant to raise the rates and would prefer a return to the old rate support grant. Others like Blunkett also favour a reformed rating system, supplemented by a local income tax.

Subsiding industry

In a Fabian Tract, "Building from the Bottom: the Sheffield Experience" (October '83), David Blunkett and Geoff Green (principal strategy officer in the council's Central Policy Unit) make some interesting points: "Even if Sheffield Council were legally able to invest more than the product of a 2p rate in local industry, there are political limits to the amounts that can be raised from working-class householders. We must look for external finance, and it seems logical to tap into pension funds generally and specifically those controlled by local councils. The principles underlying their investments should be the same as those governing the People's Bank which supports the Mondragon co-operatives in northern Spain... It uses the money of the people to re-invest in those people."

The council's critics also seem to ignore the benefits to the city's economy and social environment of services such as education and housing, and forget that much of the council's expenditure stays within the area. Birmingham, which has cut its workforce, and receives more central funds per capita, has substantially higher unemployment and its economy is devastated.

In "Building from the Bottom" David Blunkett and Geoff Green tell us that "our home helps and teachers surely make as much contribution to our economy as stockbrokers or steelworkers employed by the private sector. Council spending in 1983 on goods and services from 900 local firms - worth around £20m - stimulated the local economy and sustained private sector employment."

They see the problem arising from the theoretical division of the economy by Tory and many Labour politicians into two sectors: one productive, and the other non-productive. And they call for the Labour Party "to re-instate the central relationship between alternative economic policies and a social strategy. In short we should produce for need." In Sheffield this approach is already being explored by the council's employment department set up two years ago.

This new department is presently concentrating on

projects - such as worker co-operatives - with least access to traditional sources of finance, and on jointly planned ventures with the private sector which will have a significant effect on local employment. The most ambitious scheme is a regeneration of the Lower Don Valley, once Sheffield's main industrial area.

New employment zones

Five years ago there were 40,000 people employed there in steel making and allied trades such as engineering. Now only half that number are employed and the few surviving factories are surrounded by derelict buildings and wasteland. The 10-year programme proposes a massive clean-up and regeneration for nearly 2,000 acres through the creation of a 120-acre park, a number of green corridors, the improvement of surviving industrial areas, and a new employment zone. When I asked David Blunkett about the sort of jobs that will be created by a scheme that will cost the council a minimum of £8m, he replied: "Obviously the action of doing something about it creates jobs in itself both directly and in the knock-on effect of materials and equipment, but also obviously in that people in work are going to spend money on goods and services that put other people into work... But primarily we save what we can of the special steels industry, because we do need a special steels high-tech facility in Britain if we're not simply to give up any type of manufacturing base and hand over to the rest of the world to either provide for us, or for us to become supplemented by them. We need to look at what is going to be required in the 1990s, and therefore the development products is very important..."

The new employment zone would initially be a 20-acre site of trees, shrubs and grass mixed in with small factory units and workshops which will take up about 30% of the area. The units and workshops would be made available to new firms and co-operatives whose impulse was not the maximisation of profit but rather the production of socially needed products.

**Rates total less than
2% of sales income**

The council has already begun to encourage research into such product development through the establishment, with the city university and polytechnic, of the Sheffield Centre for Product Development and Technological Resources (SCEPTRE), and in co-operation with similar groups elsewhere in the UK. Products already developed include a dehumidifier designed to alleviate condensation problems in houses, and a wash-basin for the disabled.



David Blunkett says that they would "look at setting up people not just in production but in software and expertise providers as well... We would obviously want to see things that use some of the skills that are available from Sheffield, which is a skilled artisan city, and people need the ability to use their talent and have the status of being able to see something worthwhile which they themselves are contributing to. And that means we've got to revolutionise our training facilities, our education provision so people see those possibilities, rather than training people for the dole queue..."

REACTIONS

Reactions among the people I spoke to varied from some greens who saw the Lower Don Valley scheme as more of the same growth-oriented industrialism, to green socialists who felt that at a time of increasing unemployment, it was a realistic transition to more sustainable non-exploitative work - unless it ended up fettered to the past. Given its present statements and the influence of the large unions, the council could be tempted to use the New Technologies to prop up the remnants of industrialism.

The unions tend to be somewhat conservative in their approach and need to be restructured and re-oriented towards the future. As one ex-Labour Party member (over the Falklands), but still committed socialist, told me: "This close tie to the unions makes the council more 'Labour' than 'socialist' in the true sense of the label." As David Blunkett put it:

"Well, I don't believe that there's a crock of gold and we simply change hands with it, I do believe that we can actually increase the available use of total wealth that we have, not just the use of minerals, products... and it can be stretched and new innovations, new developments can make things possible that were previously felt to be impossible. So that there's not just a finite amount there and you've just got to dish it out differently." But he does qualify it by emphasising the need for democratic structures that help people make the right choices about whether the resources are used to meet needs in the whole world, or to make profits for a slight few.

David Blunkett may not have recognised the limits to growth, but perhaps the concern for the right use of resources is a step in the right direction. Since new technology is unlikely to bring back many old jobs, and many of the new ones it will create will be at the expense of others, especially those of people already badly hit such as women in offices, the constraints may be recognised in time.

However the idea behind the new employment zone, with its emphasis on a more human-scale working environment and a desire to find new ways of working and socially needed products, is promising. But it needs to look forward, not back, and at the radical potential for small-scale enterprises.

The council have helped with a number of small-scale experiments - the Peace Shop, and various workshops. Most small schemes look puny and uninspiring alongside large conventional enterprises, and are underrated. It seems that the experience of how such alternatives are initiated, implemented and developed are being either ignored or missed, partly through lack of time, so that any 'growth' in their number or effectiveness is being lost.

There is still a lot of initiative around which the council has not grasped the significance of - yet. A 'Group for Regenerating Our Wastelands' (GROW) is trying to establish a city farm and Centre for Alternatives in the east end near the Lower Don Valley. They face problems of raising enough money to get started and finding a suitable piece of land, especially since much of the urban wasteland is polluted after decades of industrial exploitation. The original plot of land they hoped to get from the council has now been earmarked for other development, though another plot may be available from elsewhere. GROW hope to involve the local community as much as possible in the project - for instance, by trying to grow unusual vegetables which are used mainly by the West Indians and Asians who form a high proportion of the community in this area.

DIFFICULTIES

The council also seems to have a disease that even greens suffer from: the general lack of insight into the dynamics and development of new forms of working and organising. This is not only visible on both sides in the growth of small-scale projects, but also in the implementation of the council's "collective community politics". This latter is fundamental to the new approach to services, job creation and currently to building opposition to the Rates Bill. As David Blunkett put it: "We need to raise awareness and consciousness about the importance of public service and the threat to it... Therefore the steps we take now are providing a foundation and at the same time doing a political education job which should have been done for many years, which is to persuade people that public service is good and provide essential facilities which are rightly the possession of the people who created the wealth and who should spend it, but above all that it's democratic."

He sees this kind of politics as meaning that the council "have to engage people in actually having some say over things that affect them most, and that's proving extremely difficult. A changing in the way in which services are experienced by people - their commitment being related to the feeling that they are services, that they belong to them. The involvement of tenants in the running of their houses, of disabled people in the centres run by social services committees, the involvement of people in sports and leisure activities - in the sense that they help to run them." Something very different from the 'Focus' politics of the Liberals.



"All those things are possible, while still retaining a perspective of the redistribution of wealth and power by actually using from the centre the resources that are available and the clout that's available to put that in the way of those who normally would not have the right to a share of the cake and the say, rather than simply pretending as many Liberals have done that you can deal with it without significant change in the distribution of resources or in the distribution of power." Greens take note!

He is just as critical of past local Labour administrations - "I think that's been the lesson of the Labour Party in office in local government in the last few decades, that very well-meaning activity turned into benevolent paternalism, which in turn smothered or controlled people in a way which is detrimental to their own activity."

"It's a very difficult line that we tread in having to take action from the centre and having to make the machinery work differently and having to ensure that you throw the weight of the local state (as it was put a few years ago) behind people. And that does mean that at times you move faster than you would really prefer to. It means that you sometimes make mistakes."

It's clearly early days and the council is trying to ensure that the direction is right, but there are in-built problems which all progressive groups inherit. Hierarchies with traditional ways of working, and often with fixed ideas, can pay lip service and by-pass innovation or even undermine it by fettering it to out-dated demands. Local authorities and unions are as prone to this as big business and Whitehall, and Sheffield has not sufficiently avoided the problem.

Criticism therefore needs to be constructive, away from confrontation towards co-operation, especially where such a local authority shows signs of wanting to change. As one person said to me, it would be a tragedy if the potential was not realised because the HOW rather than the WHAT was left out. Sheffield offers the basis for building a future for people and the planet, even though the city council may be tied to understandable short-term employment and welfare concerns. Now it needs a green perspective.

David Blunkett does not see himself as "green or black", but he sees community investment, the right use of resources, and democratic decision-making as "usefully balanced in a socialism that puts the needs of people and the quality of life first. In other words it's the politics of people, it's human beings, rather than people who are subject to economic market forces."

"And therefore I believe that those who are committed to a decent environment, and are concerned in the ecological arena, have to be socialists; because only by logical democratic decision-making can you overcome them. Market economic forces will always be against it because there will always be short-term decisions and the pressures of profitability, not in the logical use of what is rightly ours."

I can't agree with his suggestion to join the Labour Party - yet - but I do believe that a socialist concern for people is fundamental and that it must be merged with a green concern for the planet.

Many thanks to David Blunkett for the interview, and to the many others who gave and supplied information. - R.C.



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Automation, Unemployment and the Distribution of Income: Keith Roberts. European Centre for Work and Society, 1982.

Keith Roberts is described in this work as Head of the Theoretical Physics Division at UKAEA Culham Laboratory and also Principal Editor of Computer Physics Communications. He is a 'software' specialist having held a visiting professorship at Imperial College, London.

In this work Mr Roberts has sought to bring engineering principles into the economic field. He discounts the present objectives of the major political parties in seeking to promote schemes for creating employment, particularly the expansionist ideas that have been put forward by such people as Lord Meynard Keynes. He contends that automation is bound to proceed to such lengths that it would eventually nullify any work promotion engendered by either heavy financing of industry or large scale government projects. He visualises a steady reduction in the need by regular industry of human labour, though he recognises that this may be off-set somewhat by transient or part-time work. From this he deduces that it is no longer politic to rely on investment and employment to provide everyone with a livelihood.

His solution is to advocate the paying of a basic subsistence income called the National Dividend payable to all citizens irrespective of any other income. This means that anyone not in work gets the Dividend, while anyone in work gets the Dividend and his or her pay. It is proposed that the Dividend replaces most of social security payments, including unemployment and child benefits with supplements, old age pensions, and student grants, and that it operates without a means test or other restrictions. It will be seen that this bears a close resemblance to the National Income Scheme of the Ecology Party. The author argues that it meets the needs of growing automation and puts less pressure on industrial workers to adopt the restrictive practices now felt necessary to preserve standards of living and that it will encourage transient and part-time work. He forses a steady increase in the Dividend suggesting it soon reaching a figure of £1500 per head, with children receiving half this. For a family of two adults and two children this would work at £90 per week approximately.

When, however, we come to the funding of the project difficulties are found. In the Summary he says, "Taking the UK as an example, we find that half the national income would need to be distributed as ND and half as wages, salaries and profits, and because of the total size of the ND it would be necessary to finance it by taxation." Now if, as has been implied elsewhere in the treatise, the tax is to fall entirely on the earned incomes and profits, this would mean one of 100% - hardly an inducement for anyone to go to work or keep investments. Even if the quotation should be taken to mean that the wages, salaries and profits would amount to half the national income after tax has been deducted, this would mean a tax of 50% just to maintain the Dividend and does not take into account payments in the public sector for defence, roads, health services, etc., etc. Furthermore as it is claimed by such people as Professor Stonier that

automation can proceed to the point where something like 90% of the adult population would not be required to work, this would put an impossible burden of taxation on the 10% in work.

True he does discuss taxation by VAT, visualising increasing it to 100%. This would mean those on the ND only would have to pay it as well as those earning. You then get the situation of the government giving money with one hand and taking it away with the other. Though he does refer to Douglas Social Credit, he does not accept its idea of financing the ND with the creation of consumer credit based on the country's production despite the fact that it deals with the situation of automation progressively destroying taxable incomes.

In general it can be claimed that this treatise has been compiled in too simplistic or ecliptic a way. It seems to imply that the author visualises that there is a limited amount of money in existence going round in a continuous circuit. It does not appear to recognise that money comes into existence as a result of vast loans from the banks who create it out of nothing, and when these loans are paid back the money is destroyed. It does not consider the great burden of interest that the public has to pay on these loans in higher prices or taxation; that this accounts for 40% of all rates and nearly £25 per week paid on average by every family in taxation just for the interest alone on the National Debt. When the author faces up to these matters, then it will be possible to take this treatise more seriously. Wilfrid Price

REVIEWS REVIEWS WE OR THEY?

Ecology 2000: The Changing Face of Earth. Edited by Sir Edmund Hillary. Michael Joseph, £10.95.

"If you think you're going to survive the next thirty years - think again!" was how the publicity presented Gordon Rattray Taylor's eco-crisis classic, 'The Doomsday Book', in 1970. Fourteen years on we are, by and large, still here. Despite a mounting catalogue of threats (and of books about them) we seem to be learning to live with them, and taking a more measured view of them. Certainly this very measured and tastefully illustrated book covers the whole spectrum of environmental problems, including several never considered by Taylor back in 1970, in a skillful and objective manner.

Edited by Sir Edmund Hillary in the role of popular figurehead, it includes contributions from such excellent writers as Norman Myers and Michael Allaby. The fact that Tom Burke, former-FoE-stalwart-SDP-aspirant, gets to write the sections on the "Politics of Ecology" and "The Future" will signify to many Green Line readers that this book offers no radical solutions, but it is undeniable that the presentation of this book will get the ideas of writers like Myers across to a far wider audience. One hopes that this might help turn many of the concerned into the committed.

So what are these "eco-experts" saying? Firstly, they give the lie to my use of the word "we" in the first paragraph. Our temperate, well-watered island, amply equipped with energy supplies, is comfortably buffered against such crises as desertification, deforestation, and starvation, that ravage the South and are fully described here. As are also acid rain, climatic change, and plant and animal extinctions. Not much on

SUSAN GRIFFIN

Ideologies of Madness

Conclusion.

THE PATH TO SUICIDE

What I began to realise after I had studied pornography and anti-semitism, and also racism in America, was that any ideology, any system of thought or ideas, can be used in a sense to separate us from ourselves, can be used to deny self-knowledge, can be used to fail to recognise who we are. The psychological motivation for such a separation as I have described is that if I can believe that you are emotional, you belong to nature and I belong to culture, then I can really participate in a kind of delusionary sense of power over nature and I can believe that somehow, because I'm thinking and I'm spirit but yet I don't have a body, that I'm not going to die and I'm not going to suffer from, say, a hurricane, or I'm not going to suffer from hunger, or I'm not going to experience the results of a famine. So that in some subtle way I begin to experience myself as not part of this biosphere and not dependent on the earth or on bodily needs.

Within this civilisation this kind of split between nature and culture can really be experienced through any ideological system, even ideological systems with which I agree. Even feminism can be used this way.

I want to read to you again from Timmerman. He is speaking again of the thinking of the authoritarian regime in Argentina that imprisoned him:

"The devices are recurrent in all totalitarian ideology, to ignore the complexities of reality or even eliminate reality, and instead establish a simple goal and a simple means of attaining that goal."

So that slowly what happens is that through an ideological system one begins to believe more in ideas, to put ideas in front of material reality. Psychologically, through maintaining the supremacy of an idea, one experiences the delusion that one has power over nature; therefore one feels that, through being able to manipulate reality intellectually, one is going to survive. One creates physical safety in this way. You come across for instance a statement from T K Jones, the man who was hired by Reagan in Washington as adviser on civil defence, whose idea for saving the American population from the eventuality of a nuclear bomb attack was to distribute shovels to every American.

His idea was that if you just dig a hole and put earth over yourself, you can survive an atomic attack! Whereas anybody who knows anything about the effects of among other things nuclear radiation knows that this is insane. A school child asked who is going to put the earth on top of you. Even on a simple practical level, you see, Jones had not come to terms even with the simple physical mechanics. But if you understand that in fact the whole point of this madness is to deny physical reality, we can come to realise why it is that in the face of the data that point out the danger of a nuclear holocaust, that point out the ecological dangers we are facing today, that the powers of this civilisation continue on the same course of self-destruction - because they don't believe that their safety lies with material reality. They believe that their safety lies in believing in an ideology, in believing that what they believe is correct.

I want to read to you a quote from Hannah Arendt about totalitarian ideology:

"Before they seize power and establish a world according to their doctrines, totalitarian movements conjure up a world of consistency which is more adequate to the needs of the human mind than reality itself, in which through sheer imagination uprooted masses can feel at home, and are spared the never-ending shocks which real life and real experience deal to human beings and their expectations. The force possessed by totalitarian propaganda lies in its ability to shut the masses off from the real world."

Later she says that indeed what happened under Hitler in the Third Reich and what does happen under totalitarian regimes is that people cease to believe the evidence of their own eyes and ears - that they don't credit their own perceptions, but prefer to believe in what their leaders say is real. And this giving up of the authority of the self, by the way, is an inevitable result of having abandoned your material life, because if you are split against yourself, if you are split against your own body and your own emotional life, then it becomes a kind of natural progression of that to give up the right to make decisions about your life to someone who has been made an authority by culture - because you trust cultural authority more than you do your own natural existence.

As I said before, really very humanistic systems of ideas - theories - can be used in the same way, can turn into ideologies whose real purpose is not to explain the nature of reality, not to understand the nature of existence, but in fact to make us believe that we have power over nature and over reality which is not natural, which is not possible.

I want to read to you a passage from Isaac Deutscher's



biography of Stalin, in which I believe Stalin was in fact doing this:

"He (Stalin) was now completely possessed by the idea that he could achieve a miraculous transformation of the whole of Russia by a single tour de force. (Deutscher is explaining that period of Stalinism that occurred when he was trying to industrialise the Soviet Union very quickly.) He seemed to live in a half-real and half-dreamy world of statistical figures and indices of industrial orders and instructions, a world in which no target and no objective seemed beyond his and the party's grasp."

And he speaks of that period in which Stalin was trying to collectivise all of the farms. He destroyed the farms that existed before the collective farms were actually functioning, so there was a terrible famine.

"The whole experience seemed to be a piece of prodigious insanity in which all the rules of logic and principles of economics were turned upside down. It was as if the whole nation had suddenly abandoned and destroyed its houses and huts which, though obsolete and decaying, existed in reality, and moved lock, stock and barrel into some illusory buildings."

But in fact, you know, that's what we're living in now: one huge, illusory building.

I've been reading a book which reveals the plans that the Pentagon has worked out for an extended nuclear war. What the generals did a couple of years ago, they actually went through a war game; they constructed all the moves that they felt would occur in an actual nuclear war, and they went through those moves in a kind of theatrical construction. At the point at which the Pentagon generals are supposed to be deciding whether or not to conduct a war, they are taken by a limousine to a central location in Washington to a room which is filled with maps and charts and TV screens with computer figures flashing on them. They are taken completely out of the natural world. Not only are they not looking at any real cities, any real battle field, any real human beings that are going to engage in armed conflict; but they're not even looking at the weapons that they themselves are going to use. They're only looking at figures. It's sort of like culture rarified down to its most abstract unit. And the language that they use in order to make this decision - they receive communications from American bases all over the world, in this fantastic sort of war game, that describe what the Soviets are supposed to be doing - and these communications all come in a code, so that even the language of what's occurring has been moved one step further away from an emotional, physical reality. So that nobody says to them, "My God, the Russians are coming over the Yugoslav line!" It's more like "X23 - 54, code 15-JR-3" - you know, the possibility for any physical, emotional reaction which ties one in an intuitive sense to reality and then bears with it because of that. The desire to survive has been eliminated from the plan.

I want to read to you a section from Sassoon's description of World War 1 so that I'm giving you a contrast between the atmosphere in which decisions about war are being made today, and the atmosphere in which they were made in World War 1:

"After groping about in the dark and tripping over tent ropes I was beginning to lose my temper, when I opened a door and found myself in a guard room. A man naked to the waist was kneeling in the middle of the floor clutching at his chest and weeping uncontrollably. The guard was standing around with embarrassed looks, and a sergeant was beside him patient and un pitying. While he was leading me to the blanket store I asked him what was wrong. 'Why sir, the man's been under detention for assaulting the military police, and now he's just had news of his brother being killed. He seems to take it to heart more than most would. Half crazy he's been, tearing his clothes off and cursing the war and the Fritzes. Almost like a shell-shock case, he seems.' (...) As I went off into the gloom I could still hear his uncouth howlings."

And of course it's precisely those uncouth howlings that now the generals have finally managed to insulate themselves from completely.

The problem with this insulation from reality and from nature is that of course it never works. The insulation can never be complete, because the real feared enemy is the self. Underneath the American fear of the Soviet invasion, way deep underneath on a shared unconscious level, is the fear of the invasion, invasive knowledge, that in fact we are mortal. It's as if the possibility of death has been handed over to the Soviets: the Soviets are now identified with death. When in fact each of us carries our death within us from the moment of our birth, because we belong to a biosphere in which we are transitory, temporal human beings.

You can never escape the knowledge that you're natural because every time you breathe, every time you feel tired, every time you feel an emotion well up inside you, every time that you feel grief or anger or love, every time that you feel hungry all of a sudden, or you want to burp or go to the bathroom - you know suddenly that you are physical and that you are mortal: and so you really can't get away from this knowledge that you're part of the biosphere. Yet this is a civilisation which has so much learnt to associate safety from escaping that knowledge, that we increasingly grow into a state of panic through this separation from our physical selves.

You can see this very clearly in the history of the holocaust. You would think that, suppose the Nazis were afraid of Jews because they ascribed to the Jewish people the power of nature to take and give away life, that when the Nazis had stripped the Jews of civil rights (Jews were not allowed to ride on public transportation, they were not allowed finally even to own property, to vote, to hold governmental office), you would think then that perhaps the Nazis would begin to feel safer and that they would



calm down once the Jews had been stripped of these rights. But in fact the cries of anti-semitism got more shrill as the Jewish people became less and less powerful. And the more the Jew fell under the control of the Nazi, the more the Nazi escalated his anger against the Jew and his fear of the Jew - until in fact Jewish people were tortured and killed.

You can see the psychology of this in the early history of Reagan before he became President. When he was in Hollywood and an actor during the McCarthy period, he really sided with the 'Reds-under-the-bed' fear. He was in an interview with Robert Scheer recently describing that period of history and he actually said well, it was we the actors who were not communists or communist sympathisers who were on a blacklist. In fact, if you know the history of the blacklist in Hollywood, it devastated many people's lives - not only their economic careers, but it was very devastating to many people psychologically, suddenly not to be able to work, to have to leave the country. Those who were in the right wing or conservative, as was Reagan, benefitted a great deal economically and in every other way, socially and creatively, from the McCarthy period because they were suddenly given this favouritism and given roles other people couldn't take.

The Nazi had the same kind of reversal of power belief too. Even though the Jewish people had been stripped of civil rights and put in concentration camps, the Nazi still continued to believe that the Jew had this enormous power over the German people. Why is it that Reagan suddenly imagines himself to have been blacklisted - which is just a complete reversal of the truth? Just as the Nazi believes himself to be in the power of the Jew, or the American racist mentality says it's black people on welfare who are causing very high taxes, or black people are taking away all the jobs - which is one of the easiest things statistically to demonstrate is not true. I've heard the same kind of argument in England towards people of colour: it's a complete fantasy.

Why is it that this reversal takes place in this racist, pornographic, ideological mind?

Because in fact if you have taken the 'other' who is the symbol of nature, and if you have done a great deal to contain them (you have stripped them of civil rights, you've humiliated them publicly, developed a whole ideology that describes them as inferior, you've even put them in concentration camps), yet still you see what happens is that despite all these great measures you are still invaded by the knowledge of your own body. The knowledge that you are mortal still is there in your own tissues. You still will fall asleep, you will still dream, still breathe, you still get hungry, you still are part of this biosphere - so every attempt you make to dominate nature through this 'other' who has in your mind become nature itself, fails; and therefore you must begin to believe that this 'other' is immensely, terribly powerful. You know - the 'femme fatale'.

The very means which we use to control nature, to dominate nature, or to dominate the 'other', lead us back to images of the very deaths we fear. For instance, the production of atomic weapons, which lead us to believe that we are powerful, leads to the existence of plutonium: and so we have these great masses of plutonium and we don't know quite what to do with them. It's almost as if plutonium were this great massive amount of unconscious knowledge that we don't know where to put: it seeps out and comes through the air and can get us from every angle. There's no way of beating it. So in producing this very weapon that makes us feel very powerful, we've become in a way unnaturally powerless. We lose even the simple physical power of survival that we have by virtue of being human beings.

What I discovered within pornography was that in fact this kind of ideological solution, this madness, this delusion that we can identify with culture and hence survive through that and dominate nature, has as part of its hidden agenda a final solution: and it's a very frightening one.

You can see this final solution played out in pornography. There's a pornographic film, which is really a film about pornography, "Peeping Tom", in which a pornographic photographer photographs women's bodies; and as he is photographing the women his camera - which is loaded with a sphere - fires the sphere into the woman's body, so his camera then takes a picture of her in her death agonies. And while I was studying the holocaust I learned that there were two paradoxical things going on in the holocaust which you would think on the surface of it would be contradictory. At one and the same time the Germans were doing everything possible to hide the fact that the concentration camps existed. They did not want the international judgement to come upon them. So they constructed a fake concentration camp for the Red Cross to come to with a pleasant summer camp atmosphere. But on the other hand the most thorough documents of the atrocities in the concentration camps were kept by the Nazis themselves. They noted down every sort of torture delivered, the numbers of people they killed, they kept films and records and notations of every kind on what they did in the concentration camps. I was travelling across America once to give a lecture and I happened to be in a car with an American Indian woman. I explained this whole thing to her, and she said well, that's interesting because the best records of the destruction of the native Americans were kept by the American army.

Because in fact what the final solution is, for this insane mind, is to destroy nature and replace nature with a cultural record of nature's destruction. So that in this madness, this is the final idea of complete safety. It's the proof that nature has been dominated. T K Johns, who is the man who believed that with enough shovels we can protect ourselves from nuclear warfare, has an office which is filled with photographs of Hiroshima after the atom bomb. And the US Pentagon has now come up with an idea of how a nuclear war can really be won. That is in



fact that the real winner will be the one who has a record of everything that has happened. So to this end enormous amounts of money have gone into building satellite systems and into special airplanes which will be flown above the earth to record all the destruction that is taking place. And then the Vice-President will be flown up in an airplane himself - an airplane fully equipped to run a nuclear war and to receive information in it about nuclear war - so that there will be somebody who knows what's happened. And as long as that cultural information, that cultural record of the destruction of the earth exists and survives, the Pentagon generals believe that they will have won a nuclear war.

I think it's really no accident at all that the word 'holocaust' - as in Nazi holocaust - has been used to describe the nuclear war, because in fact the German hatred of the Jew was not only German anti-semitism: anti-semitism is a part of this, and racism, and hatred of women - these are all deeply a part of this civilisation that we share. The Nazi holocaust has never really ended, it simply has continued. And in a way - unfortunately, because I'm an American and I cherish the tradition in many ways from which I come - but I believe at this point that the country that's now spearheading the movement of self-destruction is the United States.

The real enemy now is the self. So it becomes understandable that the target for the bombs at this point is the civilian population. Each and every particular human being, each civilian, is now the enemy. It's very revealing that in this plan that the generals have to conduct extended nuclear

warfare they have the President being killed as part of their scenario. And if you think of the American President as similar in fact to a king, a psychological figure who represents every human being (or at least every man, if not the rest of us!), and if you then do a psychoanalysis of this mad scenario for nuclear war, you see that really the intention is to commit suicide.

I think that there are solutions to this terrible dilemma that we're in, and in a way they're outside of the imagination of our shared insanity. So I do believe that because of that, that one of the ways we can find many solutions - or begin to imagine ways that we can survive - is through not so much poetry itself as a literary form, as getting back to that quality that poetry has in which we are whole again: we are whole human beings, and we speak from our emotions and our bodies and with our intellects all at the same time. We do not oppose our feelings to our thoughts, but we use the deeper resources of our conscious and unconscious life in order to discover what we don't know - the wisdom within us.

It's interesting that the US Civil Defense Agency has characterised the pessimism that many people have that human beings can survive a nuclear holocaust as "emotional". I would say yes, it's very emotional, it's deeply emotional...

I'm going to end with this poem, and it's called 'Prayer for Continuation'.

** Susan Griffin ended her talk by reading a long poem, as yet unpublished in this country.

REVIEWS Cont.

technology and its role in directing and currently destroying human and environmental relations. Instead access to modern technology is uncritically demanded.

However, she brings an essential realisation to the forefront of the peace movement - a movement that has begun to

politicise those to whom politics was previously irrelevant; that the current state of global war is maintained by the values that put Black and Third World women on the bottom of the economic pile.

As Wilmette, a Black American lesbian, says,

"The terms of our struggle for peace are that the direction and the organisational priorities that we need to carry out at any particular moment guarantee that the peace movement not grow at the expense of those at the bottom. Otherwise the peace movement will grow, but it will accommodate war."

Sigrid Shayer

REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS

3m. LESS JOBS if we leave the EEC?

THE NEED for the Third World to produce more commodities to repay its debts will increase the present glut of soft commodities and continue the price slide. The world food prices will therefore stay low. Outside the EEC these will be available to Britain: food prices will decrease.

But the lower imported food prices would mean that fewer goods have to be exported for the same amount of food. This would cause unemployment. Much foreign investment, by Japanese carmakers for instance, is at present put into Britain in order to get an entry into the EEC. If we withdraw, this investment will dry up.

So far it looks like swings and roundabouts.

But the most serious economic effects would be caused

by our loss of political prestige in Africa. The Entente Cordiale was an agreement by Britain and France to freeze Germany out of Africa. Germany fought the First World War to get back in. Africa is that important.

The EEC is an agreement between European states to freeze Russia and America out of Africa. As long as our client governments in Africa can depend on our arms and support to maintain them in power, they will continue to sell us their commodities and take our manufactured goods in exchange. If they perceive that the EEC is weakened and might not have the strength or will to keep them in power, they will turn to Russia or America for support and we would lose their trade.

In today's terms this would be very "harmful" indeed. Nigeria alone provides $\frac{1}{3}$ m jobs in Britain every year. Therefore if our withdrawal is perceived in Africa as a loss of political muscle, and if we stop selling them arms, we must reckon on unemployment rising another 3m. The answer to that is "Take back the land".

Richard Hunt

Start with a Compromise

Dear GL,

I was both surprised and delighted to read 'Unilateralism is Not Green' by Mike Bell (GL 18).

Surprised to discover at last that there are at least some greens who share my concern for a change of approach to nuclear disarmament, and delighted that I can entirely concur with Mike's basic attitude.

However, with one assumption of his I do have to disagree - that we still have 'a few decades to achieve our goal'. I wish I could believe it. More likely we have just a few more years. Anyone who doubts that should read 'First Strike', by Robert Aldridge (Pluto Press), a highly impressive, authoritative and chilling work from an engineer formerly within the USA defence establishment.

During the 3 years preceding the General Election I put considerable effort into CND activities in the hope that afterwards, optimistically, we would somehow have a sane nuclear policy. A forlorn hope!

Is it not time that we all accepted, as Mike says, that "the time is past for ranting and banner waving"?

We have to produce policies that have a reasonable chance of general acceptance. To this end an organisation called First Stop First Strike is putting forward just two basic propositions:

(1) Our first priority should be the total rejection of USA first strike nuclear policies and weapons. To get more widespread support for this we

have to accept

(2) a minimal UK deterrent.

A comprehensive defence policy will follow later.

There appear to be two areas of controversy in putting forward such a compromise policy:

(a) For some, it is immoral even to threaten, let alone use nuclear weapons, and such is their moral indignation that they cannot contemplate accepting any delay in the disposal of all nuclear missiles even though they may admit the odds are against it. I will not deal here with the moral arguments.

(b) For many more, the problem is not so much the moral one, but rather a lack of understanding of the new nuclear situation. Nuclear weapons still tend to be lumped together - all are totally unacceptable - not realising that, in terms of war fighting, they are very different.

Older weapons, like Polaris, are what I call genuine nuclear deterrent missiles. Genuine in the sense that they cannot, in all rationality, be used to start a war. They cannot be targetted accurately against specific targets, so are limited to a vengeful role should the worst happen. They are not, in war terms, comparable with the new first-strike missiles which can be used, and in some cases can ONLY be used, for a pre-emptive strike. Such is their accuracy that, given sufficient numbers, they will give the USA the possibility of destroying ALL the Soviet missiles in

one all-out attack. The USSR do not yet have missiles of such accuracy, but it is inconceivable that they will not take some action as the threat continues to increase.

Opinion polls indicate that the majority of the UK population see nuclear weapons as an essential deterrent against attack from the USSR. Many of us find this whole concept difficult to accept, but First Stop is saying that, believable or not, we will just have to accept and deal with this attitude. Otherwise we will make no real progress towards UK nuclear disarmament.

In accepting deterrent missiles we will be able to emphasise the terrible and immediate danger that will come from the planned deployment of tens of thousands of first-strike weapons. These new missiles are so destabilising that continued deployment makes the next and last world war quite inevitable.

As one pacifist has just written to me, "I am concerned with the polarisation that has occurred on the nuclear issue. Hence I am concerned that the long road to 'peace' requires, in the first instance, a compromise to press for 'incremental but attainable' steps towards nuclear (and for that matter chemical, biological and conventional) disarmament. I am therefore interested in First Stop as a first step."

There are signs of similar compromises from people of all sorts of persuasions as the appalling dimensions of the nuclear problem begin to sink into the public consciousness.

Graham Knight
Secretary, First Stop First Strike
15 Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford, Kent.

Eco's Role is 'to Make Greens'

Dear GL,

Deeply buried within Mike Bell's squib 'Getting Elected in May' (GL20) lie a couple of truths - Green politics are not, or should not be, adversarial party politics and thus the ties that bind greens should be stronger than the divides and no one group can arrogate to itself the mantle of purity. However, I took great exception to the cynical opportunism that the article seems to be suggesting. Whilst we should applaud and support any green taking the necessary long march through the institutions that approbation cannot be bestowed on any individual, however good their intentions, who are prepared to work within and for an organisation that "revolts" them - or even "revolts them the least". For joining and representing such a body infers assent for its general aims and aspirations, so to join on

those terms smacks of hypocrisy - and I for one do not believe that Greens should be dissemblers.

We are in fact back to the old ends-and-means argument. Mike's suggestion is that, in the interests of a green ending, we cannot be over-fussy or purist about the means. My contention is that means are the ends in the making and, as such, must be predicated upon our ideals. In other words, yes to working through a non-green party if you really and openly believe that this is the way to bring about the necessary changes - and a firm no to using that party simply to achieve power.

Green politics do not merge imperceptibly into the old growth-centered politics. Between them there exists a radical paradigm shift. Those who choose to work within the establishment parties must recognise this. It

needs more than a motion or two to be passed by Conference; more than a couple of environmentally sound projects to make a party green.

I believe that there is a role for the Ecology Party - not necessarily "playing at democracy" but in providing nuclei around which Green Groups can coalesce and providing propaganda, in word and deed, for some of the green alternatives. (I tend towards a view of the Ecology Party as more of a ginger group than a political party proper.) I believe the task of Eco is, first and foremost, to make Greens.

A final rejoinder: machinery for change is not change, however necessary and helpful it might be in achieving it. That is why I believe that the parliamentary/local authority path is simply not sufficient. There is much work for Greens to do beside playing at militant tendency in the SDP.

Steve Foulger
38 Turpyn Court, Cambridge CB4 2RN.

Not Just a Pretty Label

Dear GL,

I note with a flicker of hope that GL writers raise many important points on Third World issues. But have they had a look at their kitchen shelves lately?

Have they considered the deeper implications of the names on the labels on these packets, jars or tins they find there - or do they just consider the contents of the ingredients list worth thinking about?

Go and have a look on your kitchen shelves. If you find Nestle coffee, Cadbury-Typhoo chocolate or tea, or Philippine pineapple (among numerous other things I could mention) you are participating in the exploitation of the people of the Third World - by being the final link in the economic chain of events that begins with the 'semi-slave' producer in the Third World and ends with your money passing into the cash till when you buy one of those products.

As a Zen Buddhist I feel especially strongly that I am personally responsible for the 'karma' on what I consume. Accepting this responsibility implies making value decisions about what I consume that take into consideration the ultimate repercussions of the 'direct' action of consumption. For although indirect, those repercussions are real enough: happy shareholders for Dole and Del Monte et al., while half the Filipino children under 5 are under-

nourished because their parents are underpaid and land that could be used to produce cheaper food for the Filipinos is instead used to produce pineapples - 90% of which are for export. Think about THAT the next time you enjoy a glass of pineapple juice.

At the October '83 Conference of Cardinals and Bishops in Rome, the Indian delegate spoke on the 'structural sin' that is implicit in the 'world banking business' and the 'world market system', and the Conference acknowledged that 'structural sin' DOES exist; concluding that the individual IS ultimately responsible for it - participation implying complicity. All the major churches support the Traidcraft company's marketing of Third World goods that have been produced on co-operatives wherein the workers have a fair share of the fruits of their labours.

So it is not just us Zen Buddhists that are waking up to the fact that, ethically, distance makes no difference. An individual cannot just draw a 'circle of ethics' around his own nation that excludes the 'rest of the world'. It is ETHICALLY wrong to participate (through consumption of the ultimate product) in activities in underdeveloped countries that would be 'illegal' on ethical grounds in THIS country.

(Another currently publicised

example of this concept is URANIUM MINING).

Do YOU want to wear a jacket made in Sumatra by an 8-year-old girl working in a sweat-shop where she'll be too blind to sew by the time she's 11 or 12, and so she will be forced into prostitution to survive? Don't think you'd like to buy one? Don't shop at C&A.

Consumption with a conscience means keeping your eyes open when you go shopping. When you find out about the activities of many multinational corporations in the Third World, you won't want to continue to help perpetuate those activities any more than you would participate in them if they were going on in THIS country.

Our electoral vote means nothing. Whoever you vote for, the Tories get in. Your MONEY is your most powerful vote (at least until we get P.R.!!) so use it wisely. Consider the karma on what you consume - for the sake of the many children who are starving as you read this - for the sake of your own karma.

Alternative Consumption is about putting your money where your mouth is. To find out more about the effects of many multinationals in the Third World, or for information about alternative sources of supply of commodities which have been produced in a non-exploitative mode of production, contact ISAAC: International Society for the Advancement of Alternative Consumption, Marchoglyn Fawr, Llanfynydd, Carmarthen, Dyfed, Wales.

(Name supplied, address as above).

Thanks to the Greenham Women

Dear GL,

I for one am truly grateful to the Greenham women for doing what I haven't the guts to do - namely to give up my creature comforts and my slot in the materialist establishment and go and set up camp on a Berkshire common.

The argument between separatist or mixed action at Greenham Common seems entirely false to me. Firstly, if men want to protest against cruise there are places other than Greenham where they can go - Molesworth, for instance. Secondly, in order to make the breakthrough in feminist politics there had to be a really successful women-only action and it just happens to be Greenham.

So lay off, you who think you are Brothers, and just for once let your Sisters have the limelight to themselves.

Deborah Sutherland
20 Applegarth Road, London W14 0HY.

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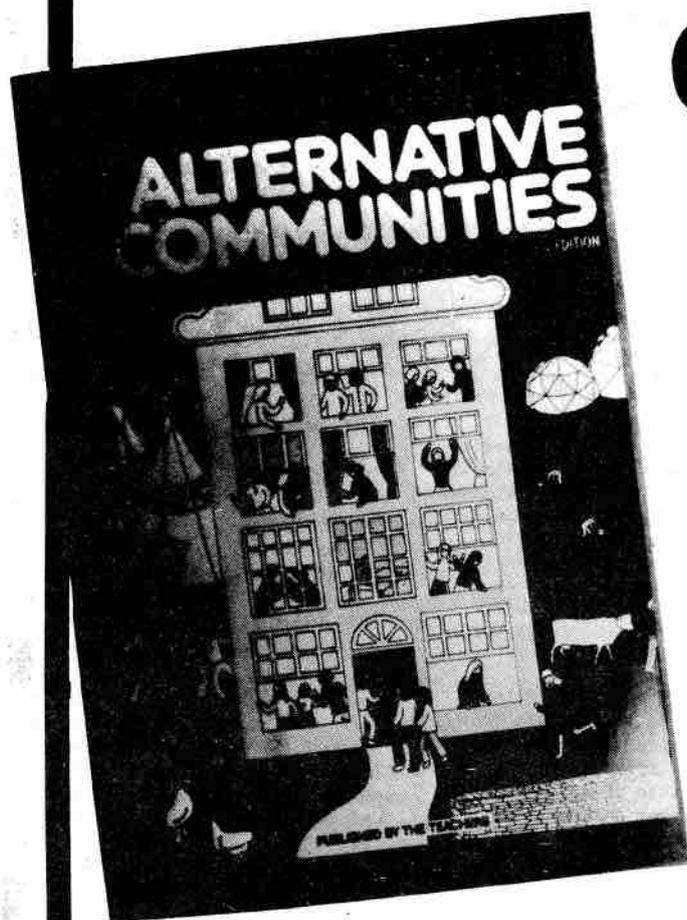
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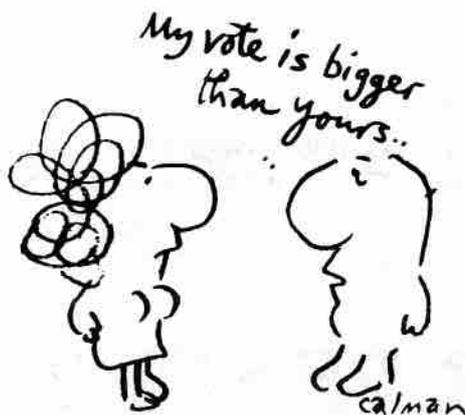
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CAMPAIGN FOR FAIR VOTES

Paul Ekins, Field Organiser of the Campaign for Fair Votes, writes:

Proportional representation never used to be considered an issue well suited to mass campaigning. But the 1983 General Election changed that.

Some readers may not have fully realised the full extent of the distortions of the last election. This government, re-elected with 58 more MPs with fewer votes than in '79, claims a 'mandate' and a 'landslide' although 60% of the voters voters

against it; Labour gained ten times as many seats as the Alliance with only 2% more votes, the Alliance winning only 3% of the seats in the House of Commons to represent their 25% share of voters.

But the real losers of the election, as usual, were the voters: more than 50% of the votes cast failed to elect anyone, and 400 MPs were elected on fewer than half the votes cast in their constituency. Negative, tactical voting was the order of the day, stifling the diversity of our society at large: only 3% of our MPs are women, Greens and blacks have no representation at all.

The Campaign for Fair Votes grew out of a real sense of popular outrage at this extraordinary result. Within 6 months of the election it was organised in 500 constituencies throughout mainland Britain and is now well on its way towards achieving its target of one million signatures petitioning for a referendum on PR which will be presented to parliament after the European elections. Everyone involved in the petition has been amazed at the public awareness of the issue. From inner Newcastle to the Vale of Evesham, from council estates to leafy suburbs, at least 80% of those approached know what PR is. Of that 80%, more than two thirds, comprising a majority of those voting for all parties, sign their name

with a ready hand. The petition has borne out the opinion polls that indicate a 60% - 70% popular support for PR and been immensely encouraging for those of us who are convinced that this is the most necessary democratic reform since women got the vote.

We have never been better placed to win PR and I would be delighted to hear from any GL reader who wants to put their shoulder to this particular wheel. If you write, please let me know your constituency, so that I can put you in touch with your local organiser. And as a first step, do order a copy of the newly-published Fair Votes Guide, advertised below. It's an invaluable resource, costs only 95p, and is available from us or Green Line (see back page). The address of the Campaign for Fair Votes is 60, Chandos Place, London WC2N 4HG. It would be good to hear from you.

Phillipines Support

Geoff Nettleton writes:

The Philippines Support Group wants to thank those green activists who responded to a recent article in GL exposing the use of British Government aid to forcibly displace peasants and tribespeople from their lands and replace them with profitable oil palm plantations.

GL readers will be interested to learn that approximately 80 acres of the oil palms were recently cut down by local people during night-time raids on the estate. So the campaign against this so-called 'aid' project is continuing both in Britain and the Philippines.

Green activists who want to know more about the general Philippine situation and link into future campaigning may be interested to come to a PSG conference to be held on Saturday May 5 at Holborn Library, Theobalds Road, London WC1 from 10.30 - 5 pm. The afternoon session will be devoted to workshops to discuss campaigning in Britain and building links with other campaigning groups. For more information contact PSG, BM Box 758, London WC1N 3XX (phone 01-221 6601).

Gandhi Foundation

The inaugural meeting of the Gandhi Foundation was held last month in London. Its purpose is to promote the study and spread of Gandhi's teaching. Information from (and donations to) the Interim General Secretary, Surur Hoda, c/o Cecil Evans, Quaker Peace and Service, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1. Richard Attenborough has agreed to special showings of "Gandhi" to support the Foundation.

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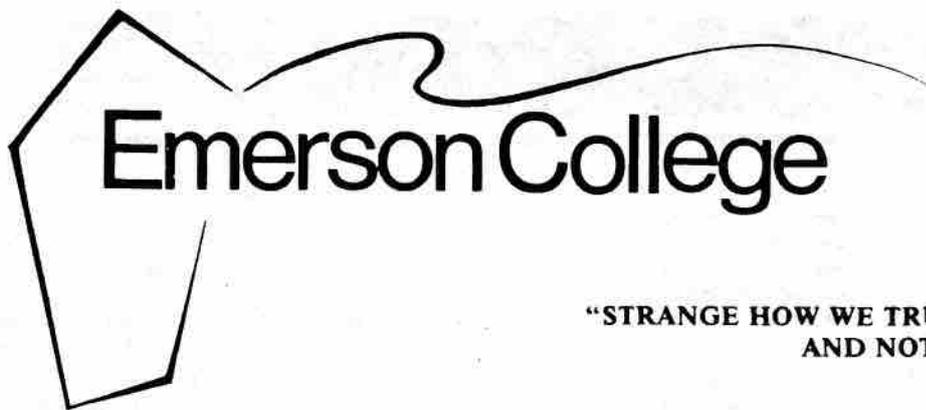
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Saturday 28th April SWINDON Friends Meeting House



Emerson College

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Christopher Fry in
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Also

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I am interested in the Summer Workshop. Please send me programme and full details as soon as possible.

NAME:

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.....

Nuclear Power: End of the Road?

A working conference with this title is to be held in London on May 12/13. The intention is to alert activists to the need to develop rational alternative energy policies as the nuclear power industry approaches collapse. Workshops will cover Sizewell, Windscale, energy policy, waste transport and management, the consumer campaign, NVDA, education workshops for those who want to be better informed, plus films and exhibitions and a chance to meet other activists and exchange ideas.

The conference will be held at Queen Mary Hall, YWCA, Great Russell Street, London WC1. It is organised by the South-East Anti-Nuclear Network, with support from Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and the Ecology Party. S.a.e. for leaflet and booking form to SEANNET Conference Bookings, 22 Beacon Hill, London N7 9LY.

Boscombe: New Date

The Boscombe Festival of Peace will now be held on June 16/17, not the previous weekend as announced in GL 20. This is to avoid a clash of dates with the Action '84 plans for action to coincide with the visit of Reagan to the Economic Summit in London.

Stirling Green Alliance

Andrew Chambers writes from the University of Stirling:

A Green Alliance has recently been established at the University of Stirling. We hope to promote both environmental and political issues pursued by the Green movement as a whole. It is also hoped that the Alliance will embrace other societies on campus to direct and campaign on common issues of concern - e.g. CND, feminists, conservationists, etc.

In the future we hope to develop outside the university and become a community group, since none exists within the Stirling region at the moment. Thus if any reader is interested in developing a green group for Stirling region, would they like to contact me at 3:43 Murray Hall, University of Stirling, Stirling PK9 4LJ.

What Does SERA mean?

(We keep getting asked: SERA stands for Socialist Environment and Resources Association, a group which is totally independent of any party but enjoys consultative status on certain relevant issues with the Labour Party.)

Eco Sceptical of Women's Case

At its Spring Conference in Southport at the end of March, the Ecology Party re-affirmed its commitment to British withdrawal from the EEC and to working for a 'Europe of the regions'. Members heard greens from other European countries say that they will represent the interests of British greens at Strasbourg if they get elected in June.

Other resolutions passed by the conference called for the withdrawal of fluoride from drinking water, for Trust Holding schemes to replace council house sales (allowing the freedom of home ownership without depriving the community of its housing stock); for the reduction of the voting age to 16, for a limit on the amount of money a political party may spend nationally during a parliamentary election campaign, for the abolition of the House of Lords and its replacement by a second chamber directly elected by PR.

Conference agreed to urge local parties to campaign in the 1985 County Council elections on the basis that they would aim for enough votes to entitle them to seats under a PR system - and actually to take those

seats. This would bring a novel form of NVDA into a number of County Halls.

It also gave its support to the NCCL Charter of Civil Rights and Liberties, and to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. "Whole-hearted support" was given to the Greenham women, and the abuse of legal procedures in bringing the women to court was condemned.

A proposal that local parties should be encouraged to form the nucleus of 'Green Groups' of sympathisers was rejected.

But the most contentious part of the conference was without doubt the Sunday morning session, when members made it very clear that they did not approve of a report presented to the conference on the role of women in society in general - and in the party in particular. Although the party had appeared to espouse the basic principles of green feminism in its election manifesto, such familiarity with the feminist ethic was clearly lacking on the floor of conference at Southport. And a proposal to incorporate positive discrimination in favour of women into the party's constitution to redress the balance of the sexes on Party Council and its committees was overwhelmingly rejected.

Molesworth Planting

A new campaign has just started to put the land at USAF Molesworth to peaceful and life-affirming uses. Crops will be sown on the base, which it is then hoped to harvest and 'send to starving people in Africa'. On Easter Sunday there will be an All Faiths Celebration of Life at 3 pm, followed by hoeing and planting. Preparation will be in hand every weekend before then. Info: Tim or Bridie, 08012 2187.

Stockport Easter Festival

Stockport CND and Stockport Ecology Party are joining forces to organise an annual festival for peace and ecology activists. Overseas speakers have been invited. There will be a creche, food, and accommodation if necessary; and live music on the Friday, and a jam session on the Saturday. Fees £2 including entertainment (50p unwaged). Information from Annette Magnier on Stockport 480 7688.

Green Groups

Additions to last month's list will appear in the next issue, along with a list of Student Green Groups. Send last minute up-dates by April 14th.

Young People and Ecology

Do you have any information on how to get more young people into ecology? Are there any newsletters or magazines aimed at young people? If you can answer these questions, Richard Alcock, of Greensands, Sutton Place, Abinger Hammer, near Dorking, Surrey RH5 6RP would like to hear from you. (And if you'll send the same information to GL, we'll print it here too).

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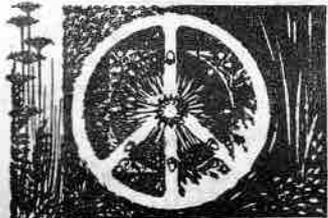
ECO-SOCIALISM IN A NUTSHELL (SERA, 24pp, 50p). Extract from 'Nuclear Power for Beginners'. 5 for £2 post free.

SOCIALISM AND ECOLOGY (Raymond Williams. SERA, 20pp, 75p). An historic convergence. 5 for £3 post free.

GOD'S GREEN WORLD (Christian Ecology Group, 48pp, £1). Prayer, creation, conflict, the feminine, economics, animals ...

FAIR VOTES GUIDE (Campaign for Fair Votes, 32pp, 95p). All the basic facts about electoral reform. 5 for £4 post free.

EMBRACE THE EARTH (Green CND / CND, 44pp, 90p). A green view of peace. 5 for £3.50 post free.



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