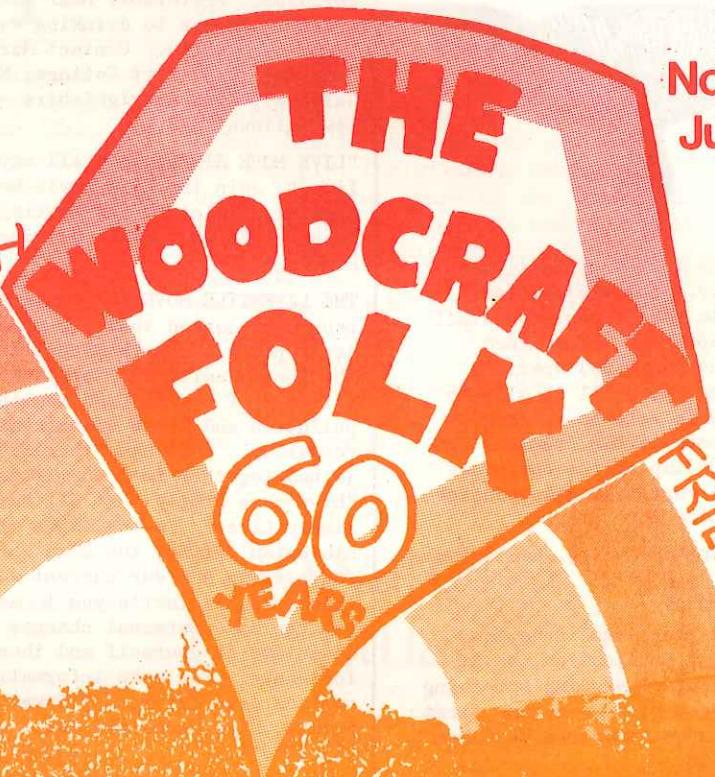


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NEW AGE OR NEW RIGHT?

There was an error in the paste-up of the first page of Daphne Francis' article in last month's GL. The two halves of the second column were reversed: you should read the bottom section (starting with line 16 - "are not seen as a necessary part...") before reading the top section. We are very sorry: if you still cannot make sense of it, we will send you a replacement page and refund your postage!

Thanks...

THANKS to Patricia Ashmore for six months' hard work on the accounts. Thanks too to Leigh Shaw-Taylor for taking over: we're now fully up-to-date and will be chasing up some of you slow payers so we stay solvent!

And thanks to several Oxford readers who have offered to help with the collating and despatch of each issue: many hands...



MAY WE REMIND those of you who take bulk orders each month that we need reasonably prompt payment of the bill?



New Age or Old Age? Findhorn

DAPHNE FRANCIS left the Findhorn Community in 1982 after a traumatic 2½ years of membership. She continues her examination of how the 'New Age' philosophy in general, and Findhorn in particular, may work to repress a feminist critique. The first part of her article was published in Green Line last month.

SINCE I HAVE LEFT I have thought much about how many women, including feminists, put up with what passes as New Age practice. Findhorn claims to be a centre of synthesis and to have absorbed feminism. That is to me patently not the case. What is it then that is operating to suppress a feminist critique by women members, a few of whom would consider themselves feminists?

Well, firstly, I think many feminists are probably vetted out as potential members and excluded. The term used to describe them would be "stuck at the form-level", i.e. preoccupied with material concerns. As single parents are discriminated against as members, this also excludes many feminists.

Secondly, there is much false mystification of what actually happens there. A standard response to queries is that you don't understand the workings of Findhorn yet, that it is operating in a completely different way from anything you have come across before and thus cannot be judged by criteria that you may have used before. If a copy of this issue of GL falls into the hands of the inner clique at Findhorn, I expect their response to my critique would be that I never really did experience a spiritual initiation into New Age energies, that I was still operating in an 'old age' way.

Another factor suppressing criticism by women is, I think, the stress on positive thinking and talking. There is also a certain bonhomie in group meetings which is regarded as sacrosanct and not to be disturbed. This would be fine in itself (who isn't in favour of mellow times?) but what it does in practice is inhibit a thorough discussion of potentially divisive issues. The person raising them is seen as 'heavy' rather than as concerned to improve things. And as some unresolved political issues have been festering in the Community for years, getting to the bottom of them might mean a few unpleasant meetings. However, taking a stand on the issue is seen as a sign that you are "attached to your emotions" (i.e. not "spiritually advanced"). One is meant to transmute "negative emotions" (i.e. work on them through meditation and inner reflection).

Nothing is said of course of transmuting cold intellectuality. In practice what I felt happened at Findhorn was that highly charged issues were avoided and not worked through. The group is said to be working on "synthesising opposing views". This has a fine noble sound to it. What happens, however, is that radical political ideas are denounced as irrelevant or, worse still, the distress of someone's "victim pattern", and conservative ideology and

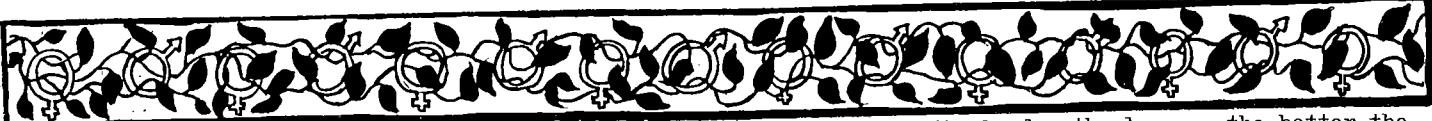
practice is accepted with very little question.

Not only were people pressured not to get too attached to emotional positions on issues, but they had to work to "release" them (i.e. to meditate on them and work "on the inner" to effect a change in their own attitude to the situation). This doctrine of course works against oppressed groups pushing for an improvement in their lot. Many women used this against themselves; for example, "I am angry at my husband for not looking after the children, but I am working on releasing it." As a spiritual norm for women this is intrinsic to patriarchal religions. For example, Christianity has cajoled us into living up to the false image of the Virgin Mary. The fact that Mary had a dark side and that black Madonnas were widely worshipped has been largely suppressed. Also Eve wasn't very popular for asserting her will and we may not be either. But it seems to me to be important that we look for spiritualities that encourage and foster a pride in the loving use of will, rather than accept these simplistic New Age cliches as if they were good for us. "Releasing one's attachment" and Buddhist "non-attachment" as a philosophy? Well, how about it for the boys on top? Let's see how much they're prepared to give up.

Towards a Feminist spirituality for the New Age

There was also much confused thinking about on political issues - that is, if members considered they should even think about them rather than about "higher" matters. A standard rationalisation for non-involvement in political movements was as follows: "I do not want to be associated with an anti-movement (like CND) because I prefer to put my energy into positive causes." There seemed to be no thinking through of this position. Positive causes (e.g. being pro a sound diet) involve taking a stand against various things (like additives). I often found this non-involvement stance was associated with a holier-than-thou mentality and elitism which did not seem to me to be founded on any real superiority. There was a real lack of concern for social issues at Findhorn which I felt reflected a narrow selfish concern for the welfare of the Community itself and perhaps accounts for its lack of credibility with the local Scots population. Guided by the pragmatic philosophy "actions speak louder than words" most locals are not taken in by the Community's fine-sounding positive verbal stance.

In fact, the Community does see itself as a centre for demonstrating New Age practice as a model for the future and that work is considered more valuable than for example being involved in the peace movement. If everybody lived like us, the theory goes, there would be no social problems. As I have outlined briefly, there are no problems at Findhorn whilst the Community systematically excludes people they see as problems. What is being modelled, however, is a group of privileged upper-middle class white people living together - not very relevant for the mass of the population of the world.



A lot of the thinking that did take place on political issues seemed to be confused by a lingering implicit dualism which separated politics from spirituality. Many members of New Age groups, including those at Findhorn, say things like, "I am no longer concerned with mere political issues" (i.e. "I have now seen the Light"), "I am working on a higher level now", "I can only work from inner to outer", "Change has to come from within", and so on. This kind of statement, considered a spiritual norm at Findhorn, perpetuates a dualistic either/or mind-set. It splits the spiritual quest for a better life for all from political action to achieve it. It was very sad for me to hear of one (ex?) feminist member give as a reason for not joining a Reclaim the Night march from Inverness: "I left all that behind me when I came here." Sitting meditating for peace was considered a spiritual and positive action; back that up with positive political action with a peaceful inner orientation was not.

The philosophies at Findhorn were also very individualistic - in spite of the fact that the Age of Aquarius is the age of groups. If a woman were having a hard time coping with some aspect of New Age living, there was a stock of dualistic cliches which flung all the responsibility for the problem back at her. One such New Age goodie is "I create my own reality"; ergo, "If I am having a rotten time it's my own rotten fault and nothing to do with patriarchy". As women we are educated to be the guilty party and very sadly these cliches work to silence women's voice of protest in such groups. "If I am having trouble trusting our leaders it's my own psyche that's at fault - off to meditate, quick..." No mention was made at Findhorn of group creation of reality, group glamourising (for example, of leaders), coupled with group scapegoating of those who disagree with existing group norms and group responsibility for social problems. Back to the vicious philosophy of "poverty is your own fault".

This position ties in with a lingering belief in the supremacy of an omniscient and benevolent God (or God-force), albeit one whom we all as individuals can now aspire to be, seeing it is the New Age. If there is unhappiness in the world, it can't be God's fault: it must be somebody else's. Up till recently Eve came in handy here with the doctrine of the Fall. It was human will that "done it" and Eve who demonstrated it to us all. This position is in sharp contrast to the matriarchal philosophies in which the triple androgynous Goddess always has a dark side which has both 'positive' and 'negative' aspects, birth-bringing and death-dealing. Thus in the latter aspect She can destroy thousands at a whim. Nobody is to blame, it just happens - a bit hard for the rational mind to cope with. The Goddess can live with paradoxes and mystery. "Yes, I totally create my own reality and my own reality is completely at the mercy of something larger than my individual being or understanding." It would be nice, neat and rational if one got one's lot in life according to one's merits. Then, if I'm lame and my husband beats me up, it must be because I did something foul centuries ago and I have a lesson to learn. Yet these allegedly spiritual positions condone human suffering, stifle social action, and reveal a huge arrogance in the face of the mystery of life and death, happiness and suffering. How long do women have to put up with this harsh mechanistic maxim as a spiritual norm? To me this is so inextricably bound up with the guilt of patriarchy, and I much prefer the other way of looking at the problem of

human misery: "the harder the lesson, the better the pupil".

Closely connected with these philosophies were the writings of two New Age prophets highly regarded by many of the "in people" at Findhorn. Alice Bailey wrote several long and obscure books which she claimed to be inspired by a Tibetan teacher on the "inner planes". She was much influenced by H P Blavatsky whose work was very popular with the Nazis. The content of her work would be the subject of a long treatise in itself and I have space only briefly to mention her worship of the "Inner Brotherhood", belief in a spiritual hierarchy, racism, and reverence for light and fire and abhorrence of the dark.

David Spangler's work was recommended reading for new members and guests in 1980, and his books are published and distributed by the Community. As it was excruciatingly boring, few souls ploughed all the way through it; or if they did I never heard them discuss any of his more startling New Age channelings. This

The Great Invocation

From the point of Light
within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into
the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love
within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into
the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the
Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little
wills of men —
The purpose which the
Masters know and
serve.

From the centre which we
call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and
Light work out.
And may it seal the door
where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and
Power restore the Plan
on Earth.

is what he had to say on the topic of "Government":

"Now all spiritual societies are hierarchical. They cannot function in any other way. It is obvious that in conducting the affairs of a spiritual society one would not turn to those who are least attuned... The point of entry for this energy (New Age) is through a being who is known as Lord of the World. He is also called the King or the Head of the Hierarchy."



Likewise on the origin of the New Age impulse:

"The seeds of the beginning of this flowering were planted a very long time ago ... when the sons and daughters of the great Manu of the 5th root race, the Aryan race, found their forms and emerged from their cradle-land in distant Asia to build towards their revelation, in future time, of yet a newer race and consciousness of humanity... Findhorn is a training ground, a reformed sanctuary and a homeland for the brotherhood from which our colonial ships may go forth again... to carry cargoes of new vision and the seeds of a new world."

This quotation makes it easy to see why there is an uncanny connection between the countries mainly involved in the Network of Light and centres of white imperialist capitalism. He goes on:

"Britain was long ago karmically given the promise to be a tiny little keyhole through which man (sic) would enter into a new age... It is not Britain's task to establish a new empire upon earth, spiritual or otherwise, but it is Britain's task to be the gateway."

One may well wonder what the distinction is between being a gateway and being in charge of who is admitted into the inner sanctum of this privileged New Age club - the Network of Light.

How does all this relate to the actual day-to-day happenings and personal interactions at Findhorn? Superficially it doesn't seem to fit at all. Individual members claim to hold humanistic values and want spiritual and political freedom. They put in long hours of hard work with much good humour and love for their ideal of changing the world. They are sincerely dedicated to serving others. Yet nearly all of them know of the sort of events that happened to me and to others, and most of them were aware of the lack of accountability of their Core Group, Personnel, Executive, and Accommodation groups, etc. How do they reconcile these facts with their ideal of creating a new lifestyle?

Well, it seemed to me that a lot of members found the sort of events I have described objectionable and did question them; but given the powerful effect of the dominant ideology there they did not push for changes in their decision-making groups. Also, they took the spiritual norms of the Community at face value and did not question them. This seems to me to be because undeniably there is much that is beautiful at Findhorn. One can learn much about healing, diet, sacred dance and meditation. The fact that the context in which all this is happening is utterly patriarchal is ignored by all but a few people, mainly women, who leave or are asked to leave. It seems to me that people are desperate to embrace anything that promises a new future and a full flowering of human potential, especially in the face of the huge planetary crisis we are now living through.

Yet a close look at the unquestioned spiritual practices at Findhorn shows that the Community has replicated the very male/light-oriented norms of Christianity. Yes, the Community meditates on the Full Moon. This may seem a great break from Christianity for new members, but reading the words of the Great Invocation used at that time leaves one in no doubt as to what sort of spirituality is valued. I had it in fact on good authority from one of the "Inner Brotherhood" that meditations take place on the Full

Moon because the Moon is then fully reflecting the light of the Sun. Significantly, the New Moon (never ignored by witches for fear of becoming ungrounded) was not observed by the Community. The connection between the moon and women's menstrual cycle was totally ignored. Solar festivals were celebrated four times in the year as instructed by D Spangler, but the four pagan quarter-day festivals were not observed and were actually feared by some of the older members. This is a very dangerous way of practising magic. All this, coupled with abhorrence of the Dark, points to yet another solar cult.

Sun (son) cults are, of course, inextricably tied up with the operation of patriarchy. It seems to me that Light Centres, although I feel most members are probably motivated by a sincere desire to improve the world situation, can never do so until they question the very foundations on which they are built. Perhaps this process is slowly under way. I heard recently that Spangler's works are to be withdrawn at his request. He thinks they are a bit out of date and is going to re-write them. Hopefully he will come up next time with something a bit newer than the Brotherhood, the Hierarchy, and the key importance of the Aryan Root Race in world change. Also, hopefully, New Age groups will recognise in time that they cannot regard themselves as free from the culture from which they emerged and will question profoundly the philosophies they adopt.

Where am I at the end of all this? Well, I left Findhorn numb and depressed, wondering "if this is the New Age, there's not much hope: they've even colonised the future in the name of the powers of light; no place for me, creature also of darkness, of night, and lover of the Moon." This remembrance of the Moon brought me closer to what I feel is the heart of the matter. These New Age groups (like Nazi world-changers before them) adopt many pagan practices, often working on ancient sites sacred to the Goddess and using them for their own solar light-oriented cult. They seem to be playing at magic without really understanding it, afraid to fully embrace true magical power and to welcome the return of the Goddess who is Virgin, Mother and Hag all in one. Reinstating the wisdom of the witches, however, is really threatening to the status quo; for to fully embrace the Goddess means to acknowledge women's power and to work consciously to redress the patriarchal stranglehold on things material and spiritual. While New Age groups scapegoat women seeking to redress this balance, they are creating nothing really new for us, and it will be up to us to redefine our own future.

For the New Age is in our hands. We have to reclaim our own spiritual heritage, free from the pernicious trappings and elitism of current attempts. There are already several excellent feminist readers in religion (e.g. 'Womanspirit Rising', edited by Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow, Harper & Row 1979; and 'The Ancient Religion of the Great Cosmic Mother of All', Monica Sjoo and Barbara Mor, Rainbow Press, Trondheim, Norway 1981). Even after all my ordeals I still believe there is a New Age happening. For me this New Age should be a rediscovery of the eternal truth of the ancient wisdom. A lot to do with getting it underway for me is the reconnection of women's psychic power with our political aspirations. It was in the interests of patriarchy to separate them in the first place. Let's get it together from now on.

Sixty years of "the Folk"

MARTIN STOTT was instrumental in starting a branch of the Woodcraft Folk in Oxford.

THIS YEAR MARKS the 60th Anniversary of the foundation of the Woodcraft Folk, the progressive movement for children and young people. February 24 1925 saw the first meeting of the Wayfarers Woodcraft Fellowship, at Holbeach Road School, Catford. The Woodcraft Folk's foundation stemmed from dissatisfaction with the militaristic and extreme patriotic tone of Baden-Powell's scouts, and because some in the scouts felt that social responsibility and "Woodcraft" (i.e. an understanding of and sympathy with the natural environment and outdoor life) were being neglected. Between the wars the Folk grew and became an established progressive youth movement, spreading from its South London base throughout the country, becoming particularly strong in the Sheffield area.

Although its 'left' critics at the time were sceptical of the relevance of hiking, camping, etc to anything to do with social change, the Folk was in fact quite active in putting forward demands relating to current problems including calls for more nurseries, parks and playing fields, town and country planning, the protection of children against exploitation and bad living conditions, and the creation of a National Health Service. They were also active in campaigns to increase public access to the countryside, including the mass trespasses on Kinder Scout in the 1930s.

A quintessentially "English" phenomenon with its emphasis on the joys of the outdoors, the vision of a simpler, more 'natural' life, strongly influenced by the writings of people like William Morris and Edward Carpenter, the Folk was accused of 'crankiness' in the 1930s. That 'Englishness' remains in some of the archaic language used in the traditions and rituals of the Folk, and it sometimes sits uneasily with its commitments to internationalism and anti-racism.

There is a tendency too for many Folk activities and rituals to project an essentially 'anti-industrial' perspective, with great emphasis in the past on getting working-class children out of the smoke-filled cities into the countryside. This anti- (or post-) industrial strand is still very strong, though as the work of people like William Morris is being reassessed in a more positive light, so too is the Folk's approach being recognised as one which is in the business of creating a better world in the future, rather than being a romantic backward glance at the past.

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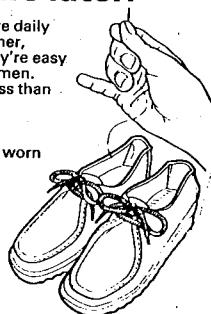
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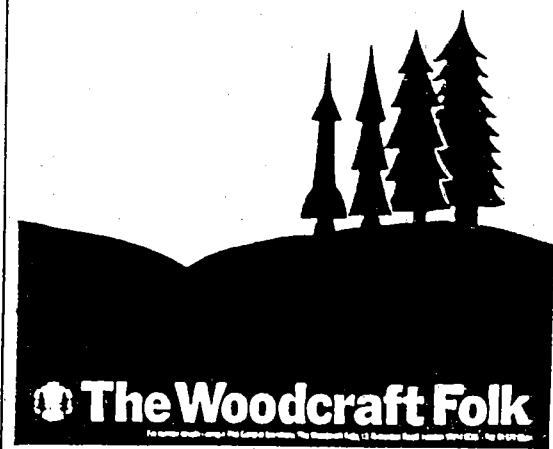
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"We don't inherit the world from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."



The Woodcraft Folk

The Folk's formation at a time when memories of the First World War were very fresh meant that the pacifist tendency in the Folk was very strong, and the lengthening shadow of fascism in the 1930s presented a difficult choice for Folk members - with the organisation continuing to take a pacifist position up to 1939. The war itself caused major disruption to its activities with the evacuation of children, the calling up of leaders, closure of schools, etc, but nevertheless the organisation survived and true to its internationalist principles organised an international camp as early as 1946.

Since the war the Folk has grown gradually and developed so that now it has about 20,000 members in 500 or so groups throughout the country.

A new phase of growth has come about in the last five years or so as the Folk's commitment to social change has come to be recognised as distinctively different from the outlook of other youth organisations. Included in the 'Aims and Principles' are commitments to internationalism and anti-racism (the Folk's motto is 'To span the world with friendship'), to an ecological perspective, to anti-sexism, and to the cause of peace.

This growth has produced considerable stresses and strains in the organisation. For many years the Folk's small size (its membership is about 5% of the combined membership of scouts and guides) enabled everyone to know everyone else, for it to be 'one happy family' with very little self-criticism and considerable resistance to change. As the influx of new faces and new ideas has occurred, differences of emphasis have become apparent - between a more

traditionalist grouping who like the small 'family atmosphere' of the Folk and want to keep it that way, and those who see its educational role as being too important to remain confined to a 'left ghetto' - and want to break out and engage in creative dialogue with the much broader progressive currents developing in society, particularly the women's movement, the peace movement, and the greens.

How it works

Children in the Woodcraft Folk are divided into three age groups: Elfs (6-9), Pioneers (10-12), and Venturers (13-15). Typically a group will meet once a week in the evening during term times, and participate in various other events throughout the year including hikes or camps at weekends, outings to local museums, wild life centres and the like, and participation in events in the local community. The weekly meetings ensure continuity and the building up of a sense of 'belonging' to the Folk. The wearing of a simple green shirt by children and adults alike also fosters this, and group activities can be developed over several meetings.

Some activities with children in Woodcraft Folk groups are structured around badges; but the emphasis is not on individual achievement, rather on group activities, on sharing experiences and skills between children, and on the effort and commitment shown by the children rather than the actual standard of achievement. Similarly games are structured in a way so as to make winners of everyone, rather than just singling out one child for praise and, by implication, the rest for rejection.



The camp community is perhaps the most important form of Woodcraft Folk activity in developing a child's sense of personal and global responsibility. Camps which can be held just for a weekend, or for two weeks in the summer, are an important synthesis of Folk ideals and practice. They enable children to come closer to nature, to explore the links between themselves and the natural environment, to learn to work cooperatively whether it be erecting tents, gathering fuel or cooking for the camp. It enables them to understand on a small scale the interdependence of human beings on each other, and it is an ideal context to put into practice another of the Folk's touchstones, the development of the democratic process amongst children. They are encouraged to exercise their rights and to participate responsibly in ways which ensure the smooth operation of the camp community, in a way which they frequently do not get the opportunity to practice in the home or school environment.



To suggest, as is sometimes done by critics of the Folk, that this means 'indoctrination' is ridiculous. What the Folk does is to indicate that paths other than the status quo exist to be explored by both adults and children in their own time and in their own way. The point about adults learning too is important. As a man it is important for me to be working with children as part of my political practice, and working (and playing) with a group of thirty zestful children is a challenge. It is a challenge to develop new ways of relating to children, replacing the traditional authoritarianism of the classroom not with anarchy but with assertiveness that is mindful of the needs of children to develop structures to relate to each other, rather than imposing adults' structures upon them.

The Woodcraft Folk's commitment to transforming our present society makes it an important cultural institution. Not party-political, the Folk is nevertheless political, in the sense of advocating a philosophy of life. That philosophy of life is essentially 'inclusive', encouraging children to take responsibility for their lives and action as much as they are able, and to develop into responsible, caring and joyful citizens.

Sixty years of experience of working with children does not mean that the Woodcraft Folk has the answer to everything; contradictions in its outlook remain, but it celebrates sixty years of life in a mood of optimism.

** For further information and the address of your local group, write to the Woodcraft Folk at 13, Ritherdon Road, London S W 17.

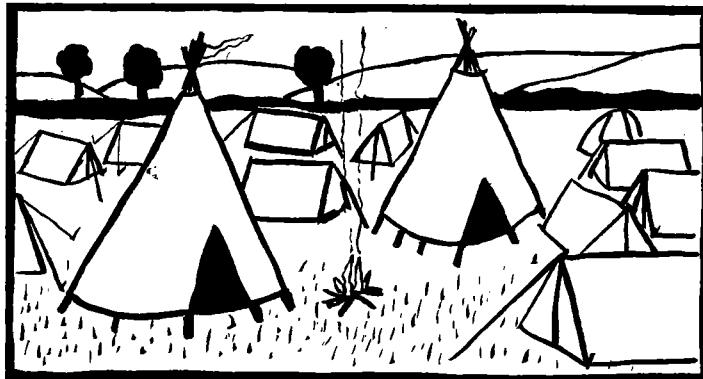


Gathering history

For those who wonder why the words 'Green Gathering' and 'Green Collective' appear from time to time in capital letters in green, magazines and writing, DAVID TAYLOR gives an account of the growth of an active and earthy wing of the movement.

THE GLASTONBURY Green Gathering, the Greenfield, the Land Trust, Sunflowers (trading), Greenbase computer, Harvest for the Hungry, a Green Congress, the Green Roadshow... many of these will undoubtedly be familiar to many Green Line readers. But how many of you realise that they are all part of one overall group - the Green Collective? They're a pretty diverse range of projects, and it's necessary to go right back to the early days of the collective to see how one group has come to encompass them all.

Our very first meeting was at the Ecology Party Spring Conference in 1980. Conference had just voted not to replace their spring get-together with a summer camp.



We held our meeting in the lunch break just after the debate and still smarting from the defeat. We decided quite simply to go ahead with the camp anyway. We had no funding and about three months in which to organise it. Despite this some 500 people came and we felt confident enough to make plans for another the following year.

The 1981 Ecology Party Summer Gathering saw us still struggling to find our identity. One end of the field saw the free festival crowd in full swing, late-night electric music blaring out (until the women's group cut the leads) and partying going on into the early hours. The other saw the Ecology Party National Executive meeting in full session, and numerous small workshops debating the merits of the National Income Scheme, Community Rent, etc. Certainly a strange mixture which is only now really beginning to develop a coherent identity.

It was the site meeting at the end of this gathering which really opened up many new directions. We agreed that the Gathering should be open to any group equally and that we wouldn't be allied with any one political party. We took on the name 'green' and started consciously to work on the concept of a 'green movement' which could form a clear spiritual, cultural and ideological perspective and bond that could link the numerous 'alternative' groupings already in existence; healers, feminists, peace activists, ecologists, etc.

For this next gathering in 1982 we adopted the slogan 'The Greens are Gathering' and it has remained our motto ever since. The new approach was very successful; some 5,000 people came along, we kept the prices low and generated a unique atmosphere which will be

remembered for a long time by those who were there. It was as if a new spirit was born. One person actually spent the whole gathering dancing round and telling everyone it was their birthday, that we were all being born again. For me it was as if the green movement was being conceived there.

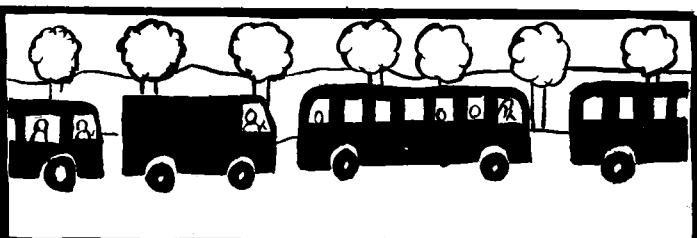
The involvement of Stephanie Leland led to our first women-only marquee, run under the auspices of Women for Life on Earth. The Greenham Common 'women-only' controversy was raging at the time and the Gathering provided an invaluable and neutral space where all sides of the debate could meet. The '82 Gathering brought in many other new people; Bruce Garrard, Robert Fielder and Mike Bell, to name a few. Each had a unique and very valuable contribution to make and the Gathering was beginning to spark off new projects; Ecology Party CND became Green CND, Bruce Garrard started a new CND magazine for the south and west (*The Radiator*), Mike Bell went on to start up the SDP Greens - and so on.

The Collective itself was also changing, becoming more of a 'collective' perhaps. We began working more consciously on ourselves, creating a framework for consensus, facilitating our meetings rather than chairing them, and gradually learning the importance of being able to understand our own group processes. It felt as if we were going beyond the limitations of 'party' politics and beginning to discover a new way of actually doing our politics.

Through this time all the gatherings and collective meetings had been held at Glastonbury, and for us this was a vital part of our growth. We were able to link the emergence of a new politics and a new culture with the resurgence of old beliefs. We were there to awaken the Earth Spirit, to give life to the legends. Many groups came to help develop that spiritual basis including the Matriarchy Network, Pagans Against Nukes (PAN), and Prana, each with their own valuable and unique contribution.

1982 was the last year we held the Gathering on Michael Eavis' land at Worthy Farm. We were getting too big and it was time to move. So 1983 saw us at Lambert's Hill Farm, just down the road. Nine thousand people came to that Gathering and we awoke the sleeping green dragon of the Avalon maze. The dragon danced around the site evoking subtle forces of renewal, and later left to join the Green Roadshow and travel all over the country. An Everyman documentary came that year specially to film us for their programme on the Glastonbury myths and the re-emerging paganism. Panorama used us as background film for a documentary they were doing on the Obscene Publications Act; and Central TV came to film part of their serial 'Timothy's Diary'. Timothy, a supposedly typical 'alternative' person, was taking his annual holiday at the Green Gathering!

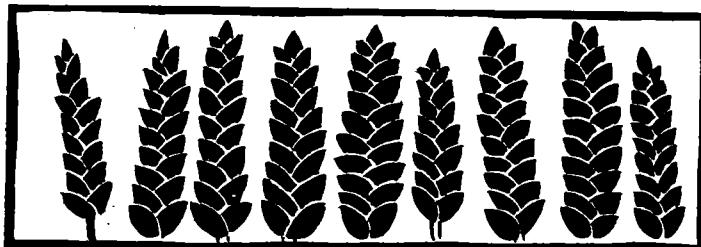
1983 was also the year of the Convoy. Over 100 vehicles arrived just four days before the Gathering



was due to begin: things started to go missing, loud music at all hours broke through the 'acoustic only' rule, tempers flared, tears flowed, and police appeared. Anyone coming into the Gathering was stopped and searched. All of a sudden the Greens had

become the target of a massive and unnecessary police operation.

There had always been noticeable differences between the 'straight' eco-families and the travellers who move around in the summer visiting festivals and fairs.



This was the first time though that such a large group had come to the Green Gathering. Fresh from Ingolstone Common Festival in Gloucestershire, and from constant trouble with police and locals, the Convoy's arrival affected the whole flavour of media coverage and put an immense strain on the organisers. We spent hours discussing how we might respond, but the cultural and political gap seemed too big. In the end we just had to make do and shelve our ideas for another day.

The aftermath of the '83 Gathering left us depressed and wallowing in a period of deep introspection. We wanted to remain together as a group but really found it difficult to face up to the possibility of another Green Gathering. In the end it was the West Mendip District Council who made our decision for us. They threatened to refuse the CND Festival their licence if we held another gathering. This was the only way they could get at us because as a political gathering we did not require a licence under the Miscellaneous Provisions Act. It was CND or us: we decided they had more to lose!

In return for agreeing not to hold another gathering in the area, the CND Festival offered us a field in which to develop our own style, run workshops, etc. Thus was the Greenfield born, a mini green gathering within a giant commercial rock festival! Numerous people saw it as a haven from the noisy, litter-strewn world of the festival outside. It was a great success and we've been invited to organise another this year. Our totem pole is still there, crystals planted top and bottom; we'll be having hot water showers, sweat lodges, workshops, music, displays and theatre. It doesn't look as if we'll be organising a separate green gathering this year, so come and camp in the Greenfield. This year, however, tickets have to be bought in advance.

Another decision in the autumn of 1983 was to start up a Land Trust so that we could eventually purchase a permanent site. This Trust is still in the process of being established, and as it grows so does our vision of its possible role - for gathering sites, peace camps, new communities, sacred land, etc. etc. A sort of alternative National Trust, perhaps!

Another exciting development in 1984 was our decision to take the Gathering out on the road - a Green Roadshow. Years of Green Gatherings and festivals had brought us in close contact with numerous travellers and now we felt ready to join them. Somehow, and quite remarkably considering we had no finance whatsoever, the Roadshow came together at last year's May Tree Fair and remained on the road all year with theatre, music, workshops, children's activities, and the Green Dragon procession. This year, with many new people, they are on the road again. For the first time the Green Roadshow will be going en masse to Stonehenge; but for the solstice itself they will be in the Greenfield. Keep an eye out for them and book

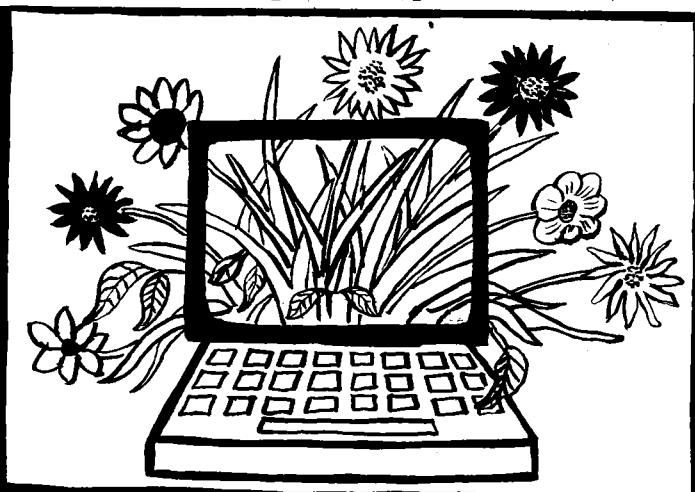
them for something in your area.

Searching for a site for the Green Gathering itself was depressing work in 1984. Everywhere we thought of going we had to get permission, all the land was 'owned' and controlled. In the end, though, the opening came and we decided to squat Britain's next Cruise missile base. It suddenly felt important to go somewhere relevant, to challenge this land 'ownership' and to really contribute to an important campaign.

The story of Harvest for the Hungry and the Rainbow Fields Village is familiar to you all. The Molesworth Green Gathering began on August 25 1984 and had no finishing date. We lived there until the February full moon, the ancient Celtic fire festival. It was probably the most significant land squat since the Diggers took St George's Hill in 1649. For those of you interested in 'signs'; the actual decision to hold the gathering and go for a permanent occupation was taken on the eighth of the fourth, eighty-four!

From being one group organising the annual green gathering we had suddenly become five or six different project groups. We started our regular bi-monthly mailing and found that we had an increasing role as a networker. Numerous individuals and groups were writing to us for information and advice. We produced an advice pack for anyone thinking of organising their own green gathering and began compiling a comprehensive directory of almost anything that might be described as 'green'. We found ourselves helping local green groups to get established and there are now local green collectives, alliances and groups throughout the country.

The networking was further aided with the gift of a double-disk drive computer with printer. We are now



linking up with other computer networkers and are establishing a group, Greenbase, to help facilitate the whole process.

We celebrated Beltane this May with a beautiful mini-green gathering in Harewarren Forest near Salisbury. Lots of new energy seems to be coming into the Collective at the moment. We seem to be moving forward towards the 'networking' concept. 'Collective' no longer feels an adequate word to describe the range of different projects and groups that we've become. We're making plans for a conference of green groups and projects in the autumn. Perhaps that will be a good time to actually launch the 'Green Network'.

All our plans and projects need fresh input and we always welcome new people. If you'd like to find out more, or keep in touch with the green gatherings and the roadshow, then please subscribe to the mailing. Send £5 (groups £10) to 'The Green Collective', 4 Bridge House, St Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs. Phone 0480-63054.

SUDDENLY, BRITAIN IS waking up to organic farming. Media interest is booming and even one of the Archers is going organic! Consumer demand has started to spring up over the last nine months, and supply can't keep up; although membership of the organic farmers' and growers' associations has doubled in a year, organic farms and farmers can't be made overnight.

PATRICK WHITEFIELD reports on his visits to three organic farms.

Two years ago, when the organic farmers and growers held their joint biennial conference it rated a bare column-inch in *The Grower*, the weekly of the straight vegetable-growing world. This year it got a page-and-a-half spread. What's more the conference was addressed by the director-general of ADAS, the government agricultural advisory service. He said he was there to meet the movement and to help him decide what attitude the Ministry of Agriculture and ADAS should take. After years of scoffing, this is a complete U-turn by the agricultural establishment in Britain, though it lags far behind the rest of Western Europe. The governments of France, Switzerland, Austria, West Germany and Holland all fund research into organic agriculture. This is matched by the fact that while Britain has only 500 organic farmers the number in France is variously estimated at from 5000 to 75000.

To find out just what's going on on the ground, I visited three very different organic farms.



On the chalk downs of Wiltshire you can see the very essence of what has become known as agribusiness. Huge hedgeless fields of wheat monoculture are furrowed by the tracks of the crop sprayers, which spread their poisons as many as eight times a year on each piece of land. The farms are big, many running to thousands of acres, the farmers conservative with both kinds of 'c' - hunting, shooting, fishing types on the whole.

Barry Wookey is very much part of this world, an ex-army officer and respected pillar of his rural community. But in one respect, and one only, he's a complete revolutionary. One day in the 60s he read Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring', and it made him stop and think about what he was doing on his farm. Together with the thalidomide case and other events at the time it brought him to realise that, in his own words, "Nature is a balance and we must adjust to that balance, because if we try to fight it we will lose in the end."

In 1970 he took the plunge and began the process of converting his 1650 acres to a chemical-free regime - no artificial fertilisers, no poisons. "Any fool can farm with chemicals," he now reflects. "It takes a farmer to farm without." It must also have taken courage to go in exactly the opposite direction from everyone else, to adopt a system that was then widely



regarded as a sign of insanity. In fact he admits that if his farm had been smaller he might have lacked the courage. "I could afford to lose a bit," he said.

This year the process of conversion is complete. At long last the Ministry of Agriculture have taken up his repeated offer to monitor the farm; and some of his neighbours, caught on the treadmill of high-input farming, are casting envious glances over the fence. Yields of wheat are a lot lower on the organic farm, but this is financially offset by the much lower costs. The cash advantage of chemical farming lies in growing wheat year after year on the same piece of land, while organic farming must be rotational. In this case grass, grazed by beef cattle, sheep and horses, balances the cereal crops. An outstanding problem is that the protein part of the animals' diet is still imported. Peas and beans, the home-grown alternative, have so far proved difficult to grow - but Barry Wookey appears to be aware of the importance of overcoming such problems. Labour input and machinery use are very much the same as on neighbouring farms, and I got very short shrift when I suggested that present levels of machinery use are not sustainable. His ecological awareness evidently has its limits.

He has revolutionised his farming without apparently changing the rest of his philosophy one jot. He told me with satisfaction that he hopes to be still driving his Range Rover when his chemical-farming neighbours have been reduced to humbler means of transport.



Westward from the chalk country lies a land of smaller farms, hedgerows and orchards. Here I visited Charles Dowding - whose 3 acre holding is small by any standards. But it seems to suit his temperament, and I doubt he'd take more land if you gave it to him.

He grows vegetables on the raised bed system. This is a very gentle way of growing food, coming as close to the natural conditions of plant growth as you can get. There is no digging, and great use is made of mulches and green manures, so the soil is almost never bare. The different kinds of plants are mixed up as much as is practicable so that they can benefit from each other's presence. No machinery has been used on this land since its initial preparation when Charles started up three years ago, and even then the beds

organic farms



Illustrations from photos by Charles Dowding

were raised by hand - all four thousand yards of them. He says he prefers to give his attention to the soil, the plants and the weather rather than to worrying how to pay for high overheads. But the amount of work is prodigious - and as though it wasn't enough he spends two evenings a week baking organic wholemeal bread for sale.

"I'm not really doing it for the money," he told me, and his actions bear out his words. He sends about half his produce to London, where he gets a high price, and he could easily sell it all there. But he prefers to sell the rest to local buying groups. The profit is lower but he feels it's a different world to that of greengrocers, "people helping each other as opposed to dealing," and it gives him more satisfaction. "It's so easy to lapse into a money way of thinking," he said. "Our society is obsessed with money." On the one hand he needs to make a profit to live; on the other he is very much aware that the nature of plants is affected by the thought-forms of the grower, and his purpose is to produce food that's truly wholesome, more than just chemical-free. How to balance this pair of opposites, to resolve his relationship with money, is clearly an ongoing problem.

Looking at the organic movement as a whole, Charles Dowding sees an important role for the consumer as well as the producer. "Only a fraction of one per cent of the country's vegetable output is organic. If all the members of the Ecology Party and Friends of the Earth asked their greengrocers for organic vegetables it would have a knock-on effect. It's a very practical thing people can do to change things."



Laura and Leary Hasson wouldn't look out of place on a free festival site. In fact, last year they hosted a small Tree Fair on their land. But summer is the busy time for farmers, so they don't get much time for festivalling. They grow wheat, vegetables, and grass for grazing in rotation, plus a small area of intensive vegetables, while five of their thirty acres are woodland and wetland that they don't want to drain "because we like the butterflies."

Over the past few years they have worked at turning their family farm into a collective, but they found great problems in getting a stable group. "Farming is such a commitment, and it takes more than a couple of years to learn the skills," said Laura. "People would come because this is a nice place to live, not because they were committed to farming." After a while they would get bored and move on. Now Leary

and Laura advertise each year for people who are both interested and experienced in agriculture to come and join them for the summer. The living is still communal, the farm income being divided between everyone who is living and working there - there are no employers or employees. But the new system falls short of their ideals. "Anarchy is still very close to my heart," says Leary, "but we've tried it here and I don't think the human race is ready for it yet. Maybe in other parts of the world, but not here in Britain."

They have been farming organically for 11 years now, and have begun to feel that organic farming by itself is not a very alternative approach to agriculture. For example, the Soil Association, the organising and regulatory body of the organic movement, is having special packaging made which is neither recycled nor recyclable. "We insist on using recycled packaging," said Leary. "And they seem to think we're just lazy. They have no overall ecological appreciation."

This had led them bit by bit towards the biodynamic system. Neither of them is a follower of Rudolf Steiner, but so much of the old earth mysteries that farmers used to know has been lost, and biodynamics at least provides some guide. "It sees the earth as a living being, and the natural universe as a sea of forces," said Laura. "It's almost like acupuncture or homoeopathy." As she spoke she was pricking out lettuce seedlings. She was doing that day because the moon was in pisces, making it a leaf day by biodynamic reckoning and thus a good day for that kind of work. "The biodynamic movement has greater integrity," said Leary. "There's no scope for jumping on the band-wagon."



Diverse as they are, these four individuals have at least one thing in common: they are all motivated by their convictions. I have yet to meet an organic farmer who's in it primarily for the money. The way the economic dice are loaded at the moment, they could all make more by chemical farming.

Barry Wookey gives the organic movement credibility. Many influential people who would be quite alienated by ideas of communes, or of plants responding to growers' thoughts, are starting to take him very seriously. Meanwhile the other three are taking the idea of organic farming much further than a simple absence of chemicals - further along the path of wholeness.

They are people who prefer doing it to talking about it. "I'm glad there are political activists out there and I'm right behind them," says Leary, who was once active in the Ecology Party. "But if I can produce some good, wholesome food and distribute it to the people, then that's my contribution."

BOYCOTT TEA AND COFFEE

Justice for the South

A group working on development-related issues has produced a draft leaflet on tea and coffee consumption. The text of the leaflet is reproduced below: in the finished version it is planned to include a form for response (and a pledge to stop buying tea and coffee), and illustrations. If you want to comment on the leaflet at this stage, please write to GL and we will forward your letters (we may also use them in our 'Letters' pages).

WORKERS ON THE tea and coffee plantations in the South today live, work and die in appalling conditions, while we in the North drink our cups of tea and coffee; a luxury we do not need. This exploitation is perpetuated by the patterns of land ownership and the practices of the international economic system, many of which date from the days of colonialism. We believe that we should aim to stop taking part in these unjust economic structures by refusing to buy or consume goods which have been produced by the exploitation of people in the South. In this leaflet we are concentrating on the non-nutritional cash crops, tea and coffee. We believe we should return money we would have spent on tea and coffee to groups in the South involved in nonviolent struggles to regain access to their land.

Only 20% of the world's resources go to the people of the South. Approximately 50 million people die each year of malnutrition or hunger-related disease, yet we have so much money we can afford to buy luxury crops such as tea and coffee. The world trade system is like an auction. We are the highest bidders. We are rich because in the past we have exploited the South and continue to do so today. Because we have that purchasing power and choose to use it, companies, governments and landlords will continue to grow cash crops since this gives them more profit than if the land was used for growing food for the local population.

Tea workers on a British-owned estate (Ruo Estate Holdings) in Malawi were paid as little as 15p a day plus a meagre meal, in 1976/77. This estate employed 4,000 workers at this time, some of whom were as young as 11, working 12 - 14 hours a day. The few employees who were housed lived in overcrowded concrete block houses with corrugated iron roofs which produce unbearable temperatures in the summer. Few tea pickers could afford waterproof garments or footwear, yet because of low pay and piece work they were forced to pick tea even in bad weather. Thus flu and pneumonia were very common; the latter was a major killer. Life expectancy was little more than 40 years. One third of all infants died within a few months of birth.

In the past, tea-producing countries were ruled mainly by Britain. They had no say in the decision taken by the British tea planters, to grow tea. At independence they were heavily dependent on tea which was largely controlled by the British companies. The local elites benefitted from the foreign exchange earned by the sale of tea. Today, Sri Lanka still relies on tea exports for over half her total export earnings. Two British firms, Unilever (Liptons)/Brooke Bond and Allied Lyons (Tetley), control 60% of the world tea

market. These multinational companies decide on the price of tea sold here and earn huge profits from the exploitation of the plantation workers. Britain consumes 25% of all tea exported, so British interests and we as British tea drinkers are thus heavily involved.

Similarly with coffee. As Europeans acquired a taste for it in the 1600s, they forced their colonies to grow it. So today 50 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America produce coffee. At least 6 countries - including Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda - rely on coffee exports for over half their export earnings. On the other hand, 80% of the world's coffee is drunk in the rich countries of the world. At present, four companies - Nestle, General Foods, Jacobs and Douwe Egberts - control on average 90% of coffee sales in Europe and Japan.

Another factor in perpetuating starvation on the one hand and wealth on the other is unequal distribution of land. In Colombia, for example (a coffee-producing country), 14 families own and control over 80% of the land. They sell their surplus to the people who can pay the highest price - i.e. us here in the North. The poor cannot afford to buy the food, nor do they own or have access to land to grow food themselves. In other words, the very people who work 14 - 16 hours a day growing the crop go hungry, while people thousands of miles away consume the product of their labour. Thus today in Ethiopia whilst millions face starvation, valuable land is being used to grow coffee.

We are suggesting that people send money they would otherwise have spent on tea and coffee to groups in the South campaigning nonviolently to regain their land. For example, one of the tasks of Servicio, an organisation in Peru engaged in nonviolent resistance to injustice, is to "struggle to defend the communal land and Indian communities (ayllus)". "The fundamental base of the Indian organisation is the ayllu, the farming community where land and water are communal property. The ayllu is not only the economic base of the farming community; it's also the centre for social, political and cultural activities. These activities are being threatened and need to be defended. Servicio is thinking of doing it by forming ayllu-federations. Only in this way is it possible to resist the attacks of the great landowners, who want to take back the land they had to give away in 1968" (the Peruvian revolution).

In north-east Brazil the peasants of Alagamar have been involved in a long nonviolent struggle to resist eviction from their lands. Local organisers connected with a group in Brazil which is affiliated to Servicio have followed and encouraged the peasants' struggle. They have provided training and legal support where necessary.

What can we do?

We believe that we should not buy or drink coffee or tea, and encourage others to do the same, to make it clear that we do not agree with luxury non-nutritional crops being grown when there are people with not enough to eat. We do not want to add to the profits of the companies benefitting from their exploitation. Instead we want to give the money we would have spent on tea/coffee to groups in the South campaigning nonviolently on land issues. Change is possible, and it starts with each one of us!

** If you want to join the boycott, or to organise a local group to do so, please send a s.a.e to Green Line for further details and a copy of the final leaflet.

Development: myth or magic?

Extracts from recent reports in the Earthscan Bulletin

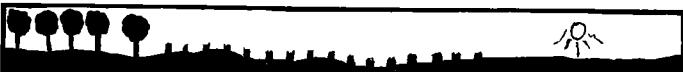
Development strikes Shereik

The small Sudanese village of Shereik on the Nile boasts diesel irrigation pumps; a health clinic and two schools. Villagers are agreed they have not had it so bad in decades.

Shereik's problems stem mostly from low commodity prices. Cotton accounts for 55% of Sudan's exports, but cotton prices have fallen so sharply the country must ration imports of petrol, flour, sugar and other products.

About five years ago farmers switched from ox-driven waterwheels to diesel pumps for irrigation. Now diesel is rationed, the pumps work only sporadically, and large fields lie uncultivated and wind-eroded. Farmers sold their animals to save feed costs. Now they cannot afford to reinvest in oxen; besides, many believe oxen would be "a step backwards". Oil rationing has decimated public and private transport. The clinic has almost no medicines. More than 100 malaria patients report to Shereik clinic each month, but there is only medicine to treat three of them.

About 800 villagers have left to find work elsewhere. The 800 who remain would not live anywhere else. They praise the peace and quiet, lack of crime and community spirit. They will survive "development" as they have survived other vagaries of life.



Soil: Nepal's accidental export

As Nepal fells its forests, its soil is being washed away into the Bay of Bengal. Government officials joke about laying claim to the new islands emerging on the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta in Bangladesh, and wryly refer to silt as Nepal's foremost export.

Soil losses from erosion have reduced rice yields from 2.05 tonnes a hectare in 1970 to 1.33 tonnes a hectare and Nepal has become a net importer of food.

Traditionally, Himalayan farmers were careful to protect and manage their forest resources. But in 1957 the government nationalised Nepal's forests and villagers lost their incentive to protect trees. Severe overgrazing has also contributed to forest destruction. Some areas support a livestock population nine times above the land's carrying capacity. Barren hillsides mean less fodder, which in turn reduces the amount of dung enriching the soil, and hence crop yields. In fact, for every hectare of cleared land many more are now being abandoned due to infertility. This is a recent trend. Unless tree planting programmes succeed in retaining the soil beneath the feet of Nepalis, the country may face starvation.



So what's wrong with shell dolls?

Many projects to help Third World women earn money teach them to make such things as shell dolls and carved wooden curios, and to do lacework and embroidery.

The assumption is that women can use their "natural" skills to work in their "free time" to earn extra money.

The facts are that women's skills extend to a much wider range of economic occupations, that they have little leisure, and that their returns from handicrafts are very low. Marilyn Carr, of the Intermediate Technology Development Group in London, argues that handicrafts are part of the soft approach which emphasises women's nurturing role. Some two-thirds of women's projects funded by major donors are for health, nutrition, education and child care. But this does not reflect the realities of rural life. Concentration on agricultural activities might be more appropriate: fish farming, animal husbandry, poultry farming and forestry.

Other critics of the handicrafts approach point out that such projects confine women to traditional crafts while men move ahead with modern tools and technology. India's Green Revolution gave men command over a new farming technology, but pushed women out of agriculture into sewing and tailoring classes.

As long as women's projects promote skills which are not in the mainstream of economic activity, they will do little to improve the lot of women or their families.



Sudan: famine in the "Breadbasket"

Agriculturalists are virtually unanimous that it is the Sudanese government's bad planning and wrong priorities which have turned drought into a major national disaster. "Traditional small-scale agriculture has received too little attention," believes Martin Upton of Reading University. "This especially applies to extension services, the provision of inputs to subsistence farmers, research and communication."

As early as 1977 Kordofan, traditionally Sudan's richest agricultural province, reported yields that were between 50% and 13% lower than previous yields over a 12-year period. Overcultivation and overgrazing has turned the land to barren desert, and today around two million people have fled Darfur and Kordofan and moved to urban shanties.

In 1977 Sudan proposed a "desert encroachment control and rehabilitation programme" (DECARP) to save small farmers threatened by desert. But the larger irrigation projects which were to make the country the breadbasket of the Arab world diverted the government's attention away from DECARP.

The big projects have often been badly planned, according to Upton. Investors have no security of tenure, so there is little incentive to take long-term interest in the land. Farmers grow crops for a few years, run down the soil, and move on.

Large areas of forest have been felled to give way to sorghum, the staple food of Sudan. However, growing Sorghum and nothing else has caused the soil to deteriorate, so it is less capable of coping with dry weather.

In the 1970s, the government felt that Arab oil money and Western technology were all their agriculture needed. Today's present shortages, and pressure from over a million refugees, may encourage the country to look harder at the potential of self-sufficiency based on small farms.





Who's saving the world?

HOW TO SAVE THE WORLD. Edited by Nicholas Albery and Mark Kinzley. Turnstone Books, 319 pp, £6.95.

AN ATTRACTIVE looking and sounding book: who could resist a quick flick through to see if it has the answer?

It is subtitled "A Fourth World Guide to the Politics of Scale". Basically, Fourth Worlders want a scaling down and decentralising of all the centres of power. They say this is the root cause of all ills and, like the greens, the Fourth World people would like to think that theirs is THE umbrella group. It sounds OK in some ways: no one would have too much power, people would be more in touch with their leaders - i.e. no nation bigger than 12 million people. But do we want to stop there, as some of the big wigs in this book seem to suggest?

Many pompously written articles endeavour to explain the various ways this scaling down might manifest itself. There are some interesting ideas, but really the Ecology Party manifesto does a more concise, cheaper job.

Few people, I think, would argue so exclusively that size alone is the key to all world problems. In doing so the book weakens itself. For instance, out of 53 contributors only 9 are women, and of 69 articles only 2 are about feminism. There is one article on animal rights, and none on racism.

The general tone of the book is that of the patriarchal ego in academic format, which is extremely irritating to read if you are the female half of the population. (Will mankind ever learn they aren't women too?).

After flicking through I think you will wonder who at £7 will buy this book, and leave it on the shelf.

Caroline Leckenby

E.O.A. Books

- GREEN POLITICS (Capra & Spretnak) £10.95
- TURNING POINT (Capra) £3.50
- SEEING GREEN (Porritt) £3.95
- CAN BRITAIN FEED ITSELF? (Mellanby) £1.95
- WOMAN AND NATURE (Griffin) £4.95
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Vegan trend

EASY VEGAN COOKING. Sandra Williams and Joy Scott. Old Hammond Press, £1.20.

INTEREST IN A DIET that is not based on meat or any animal products, and that attempts to escape the clutches of the food industry generally, seems to be growing. However, the problem of knowing what to cook deters many, especially if they are working all day at home or in the factory. What is needed are recipes that are not only pleasant to eat but also easy to follow and relatively quick to prepare - and which will thus encourage people to break away from our traditional diet.

This booklet goes some way towards doing this. It is a short introduction to vegan cooking containing some 30-odd recipes that cover soups, spreads and sauces as well as main meals. It shows the diversity that is possible both in the ingredients used and in the length and complexity of preparation; from Baked Bean Soup through Vegetable Wheel Pie and Lentil Burgers to Lasagne. I enjoyed cooking and eating the recipes I tried.

The short article at the back of the pamphlet on Veganism and Politics is a brief summary of the various reasons for being vegan. It is good to see the link between our use of animal products and starvation elsewhere in the world being made. But is it any good to replace animal products with imported vegetables, nuts, pulses, etc. when all too often these are grown as cash crops on the best land in Third World countries (with the bulk of the profits going to big business or governments) while the people are left to go hungry? This pamphlet, with every other vegan and vegetarian cookbook I have ever seen (with the exception of First Hand, First Rate by Kathleen Jannaway), depends very heavily on such imported foods. It is time that recipes as good as those in this booklet were developed using only home-grown produce: I think this would result in a two-way process because as we developed such recipes we would also find - if enough people were involved - that many of the foods we now consider to be 'foreign' could in fact be grown, or adapted to grow, in this country.

So in conclusion, while Easy Vegan Cooking succeeds in what it sets out to do - to be a good introduction to vegan cooking - I can only wish it had set out to do more.

Andrzej Kaye

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Working harder in paradise

PATHS TO PARADISE; on the liberation from work.
Andre Gorz. Pluto Press, 144pp, £3.50.

ANDRE GORZ, though a Marxist, is the economic guru of that large section of the green movement which sees a golden future when the machines will do all the unpleasant jobs and leave us the leisure to be creative and ecological with alternative technology.

Gorz attributes the crisis of capitalism and state capitalism to two principle causes: over-accumulation of capital, i.e. too many factories; and under-consumption, i.e. not enough money in our pockets to buy the factories' products. He says that "means of payment must be distributed to potential customers through taxes on high incomes and, especially, on company profits." But this is simply transferring the spending power from rich to poor. However desireable this may be, it is not increasing spending power.

Nevertheless Gorz thinks that this "Keynesian regulation only softens the effects of structural depression. It can never eliminate the structural causes of the crisis." He attributes these structural causes to the falling rate of profit which deters investment, and the class struggle which again reduces profits. (In fact the causes of depression are overproduction of commodities, so we have to produce fewer goods to buy our food. The fall in commodity prices has always preceded, not followed, a depression.)

He identifies a major factor of the crisis as the increasing social costs which accompany industrialism, health welfare, transport, housing, education. But it is none of these causes which seem to lead him to his solution.

He thinks that the world faces a unique crisis where technology now destroys jobs. (It always did. The jobs destroyed were formerly in the Third World.) And that now therefore "automation abolishes workers: equally it abolishes potential buyers." His answer to this is a social wage whether you work or not. (But if automation abolishes workers, it also abolishes the taxpayers who are needed to pay the money from which the social wage is paid.)

But at base his ideas are derived from the false premise that machines save labour. In fact labour-saving machinery only saves labour in the product itself. The labourer still has to work his eight-hour shift.

To point out the fault of this almost universally-held view, reflected in Gorz's book, it is necessary to present empirical evidence that historically the labour trend in developed countries is decisively to harder work.

Hunter-gatherers work 2 - 3 hours a day hunting and gathering. Cultivation is harder work; clearing, fencing, digging, sowing, weeding, watering, etc. More food is grown, but it is more work per unit of food. (Ester Boserup: 'Conditions of Agricultural

Growth'.) Nevertheless agriculture is not that hard work. In Ancient Greece, "the effect of the dormant period meant that for almost half a year there was little to do on the farms." (A French.) In medieval England, "a virgator had worked 137 days in winter and summer and 38 during the harvest on the basis of 5 days a week, four weeks' holiday at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, and 61 saints' days." (N. Kenyon).

In the 16th century Cornish tin miners worked 4-hour shifts. By the 19th century they were working 8 - 10 hours for the same subsistence. Today in Britain three-quarters of the female population goes out to work (and does their housework as well), so the population as a whole works far harder than 100 years ago. An authoritative study now predicts that there will not be enough workers for the new machines: i.e. everyone is going to have to work even harder, (Labour saving machinery saves labour in the product. The worker still has to do his or her 8-hour shift.)

It's difficult to know whether the world population as a whole works harder. No one knows how much unemployment our manufactured goods have caused in the Third World. It's enormous... But certainly development means harder work.

So Gorz's premise of a golden age when the machines will do all the work is false.

Paths to Paradise is a short, compact introduction to Andre Gorz's ideas and, read critically, very useful.

Richard Hunt

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letters

Offensive slur

Dear GL,

I write in response to Adrian Atkinson's piece 'Reds and Greens: friends or enemies?' (May GL) and what he describes as 'the Ecology Party attack on socialism'.

This refers to Paul Ekins' speech during the Saturday night rally at the Second Congress of the European Greens in which, to my mind, he ill-used his position on the platform to present a personal view as if it reflected the membership of the Ecology Party. I found the slur cast on socialism offensive, as must several of those who shared the platform. (One of Paul's contentions was that, honourable though its origins might be, the word socialism had acquired various undesirable connotations - if we think we can explain 'ecology' to people, I should have thought we could cope with that one!).

My personal history happens to have led me to the Ecology Party - of all the political parties, its utterances most nearly approximate to my view of things, but I don't regard it as the fount of all wisdom or claim for it the monopoly on Green politics in this country.

'Slagging off political allies' (to quote Adrian Atkinson) is indeed deplorable and foolish - and, as GL readers will know only too well, not confined to the Ecology Party. As a relative newcomer to Green politics I am quite staggered by the amount of time and energy some people are prepared to put into fuelling the 'red versus green' debate. If we were to devote one quarter of this to working together where we have common cause, with respect for one another's differences of emphasis, just think what we might achieve!

Anne Mackintosh
79 Ridgefield Road, Oxford.

Why Eco exists

Dear GL,

Adrian Atkinson's "Open Letter to the Ecology Party" was so full of misconceptions as to be naive in places. I will confine myself to just one.

He seems to think that the Ecology Party's aim is to Change Society - a bit ambitious even for eco-nuts!

Surely we agree that societies everywhere are changing; under the impact of human numbers, consumerism,

resource depletion, energy costs, arms and industrial technology, and so on. These changes give rise to fear, unemployment, alienation, destructive agriculture, industrial tyranny, an arms race, remote control by central government, and so on.

And surely we agree that to alleviate the worst consequences of the problems we need 'grassroots participation'; through education, information, individual and social responsibility, cooperation - all the green ideals.

But "the Ecology Party" is only a group of people sharing these ideals who consider that the best way to get these points considered by politicians is to take votes from them at elections. That is why the party exists; it is not the nation's best Alternative Think Tank or Project Originator.

The party has not had the impact it should over the past 10 years. This is partially because many of its members prefer to spend most of their energies in furthering specific causes or projects - from peace camps to wholefood cooperatives (or Green Lines). But it is mostly because so few of the people concerned about the issues mentioned above (socialists and others) have bothered to join - despite Eco's non-exclusive membership rule - or in many cases even bothered to vote Eco.

If you are reading this, you probably agree with the party's Philosophical Basis (unless you are a true Marxist socialist). You are Eco, Eco is you: no more, no less.

Brian Kingzett
Ty Nant, Bronant, Aberystwyth, Dyfed

Love Poet to let

Dear GL,

In your report on the CND Conference there is a comment about "some anarchist lovepoet" not being on the steps of Sheffield City Hall.

If I had been there it would have been as before with copies of Freedom, Green Line and Green Anarchist. Possibly even a new edition of Riff-Raff-Poets, hardly the same.

However, if any group or college wants me to come and read both lovepoems and pacifist/anarchist poems, I'll oblige for a small fee/free for benefits. Write c/o Freedom Bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1.

Yours for a derelict Molesworth Wold - a wilderness again for future Rainbow Villages.

Dennis Gould.

Gun-henge?

Dear GL,

In the Network column on p 20 of the May issue you state that "Stonehenge Festival has been threatened with injunctions by the National Trust. Now the site has been surrounded by razor wire - just like Molesworth."

Here is a description of last year's Stonehenge 'free' festival as published in Green Anarchist (any relation to GL?) (No! - Ed.) just in case anyone has forgotten what it was like:

"The £5000 needed was raised by fairly voluntary contributions from the traders. It was a police no-go area. Policing was by consensus. The festival did not want heroin dealers. They were ejected and their van burnt. They came back in another van this time with a gun. They chased Sid Rawle, overtook him, threatened him with the loaded and cocked gun! Then over the hill came the police. "I've never been so glad to see the pigs," said Sid.

The Green element was thin. Living saplings were being cut down for fires: hamburger stalls outnumbered beanburgers by 100-1. But there was a growing awareness. Gradually Stonehenge is being politicised."

Policing by consensus doesn't work very effectively: £5000 raised by 'fairly' voluntary contributions... heroin dealers running rampant over the plains with gun cocked... living saplings cut down and burned.

Yes, it does bear some resemblance to Molesworth. Certainly during the 10 days of the 1984 Green Gathering at Molesworth, living trees were being indiscriminately chopped up for firewood and children were being offered such goodies as 'hot knives' and 'pink dots'.

But there the resemblance ends and a distinction must be made between the actions of the National Trust in trying to prevent vandalism to ancient monuments and those of the military in the proposed development of an American missile base at Molesworth. The area around Stonehenge suffered extensive damage from festival-goers last year; the report in Green Anarchist neglects to mention the digging up of barrows on ancient burial grounds. However much it may be resented by the anarchist element there will be considerable support from the wider green movement for the actions of the National Trust.

Genevieve Bridgeman
25 Rathcoole Avenue, London N8 9LY.

letters

Lending threat

Dear GL,

The Government recently published a Green Paper entitled "Building Societies - a new framework" which sets out the Government's intentions towards the Building Societies. If these proposals were to become law without any modifications, the position of not only the Ecology Building Society but a number of other small local Building Societies would become impossible.

Basically, the Green Paper proposes that at least 90% of a Building Society's lending in future would have to be on conventional housing for owner/occupiers. This would mean the virtual ending of funding through the Building Societies of cooperatives, smallholdings, rented houses, and full or partial industrial premises. This proposal is quite remarkable given this government's supposed commitment to small businesses.

Since there are a number of societies including the Ecology whose lending is predominantly or potentially in one or more of the categories to be restricted, it is clear that many societies which have until now been meeting local specialised needs will no longer have this flexibility, and will inevitably be swallowed up by larger societies. There will be yet more concentration in the Building Society movement and centralisation of financial services with individual influence and local autonomy suffering even more erosion.

I would urge those readers who are concerned for decentralisation and local control to write as soon as possible to their MPs expressing their opposition to these proposals. These limitations are completely arbitrary and artificial, and with your help we have a good chance of exposing them as such.

Paul Ellis
37 Clevely Gardens, Mytholmroyd
West Yorks HX7 5JE.

Abusing God

Dear GL,

Why animal rights? I have an answer to the 'WHY'. Although brought up as a Christian my answer still seems to be unacceptable to the Churches: God is, for me, in every creature so if I abuse or misuse any of them I abuse God. It is as simple as that: "What you do to one of these you do to Me!"

Marjorie Bunt
Currane Cottage, 31 St Peter's Road
East Blatchington, Seaford, Sussex.

Individualism, not collectivism

Dear GL,

Richard Hunt's contribution to GL31, criticising what he calls land tax or what the Ecology Party calls Community Ground Rent, shows that he still does not fully grasp the concept of economic rent. If the whole of ground rent is recovered by the community, whose economic activity creates rental values in the first place, then it is simply not possible for those with the most money to gain a financial advantage from land ownership. They merely pay what a given location is worth; in fact, outright ownership ceases to exist, and everyone is placed on an equal footing as land-users. Introducing economic justice in this way into the very basis of society would put an end to the rate-race mentality and hence to the materialism which Richard so rightly bemoans.

'Land Tax' would not take long to introduce, given the political will. A UK-wide cadastral survey could be accurately compiled in several years, with rough estimates in the interim, using data supplied by estate agents and valuers. As for the need to decentralise power, Richard should realise that state power is founded on land monopoly and would be broken by Community Ground Rent, which would be dictated by free market conditions and not by any authority, centralised or otherwise. Public vigilance would be needed to ensure that valuations were accurate, but this could be ensured by the public display of land-value maps in council offices.

In all but the extreme, xenophobic anarchist society which Richard desires, and which is totally unrealistic in today's global village, there will be a need for government, though society should ensure that its functions are limited to those which individuals and companies cannot perform better - e.g. defence, the administration of justice, environmental protection, provision of the transport network. So how are these functions to be funded? In the final analysis, there are only two ways to do this. Either people contribute according to the value of the land they occupy and the natural resources they use, or they are taxed on what they produce by using the gifts of Nature. The latter course is a violation of the right to the full product of one's labour, and constitutes legalised theft.

Smile before you write

A study of the world's early agricultural communities shows a remarkably similar attitude to property rights in all places. The land was divided fairly by means of boundary marks, but was not allocated in perpetuity; land rights were called in periodically, as in the Mosaic Jubilee Year, so that fair shares could be re-established if necessary (physical division is neither possible nor desirable nowadays, hence the need to recover rent instead). Landholders were, however, under no obligation to share their produce; there was no element of socialism in such communities. Nonetheless, man's natural altruism flourished under these free economic conditions and showed what so desperately needs to be understood today, that it is individualism not collectivism that produces the highest degree of human cooperation.

George Morton
Scottish Land Restoration League
29 Hudson Road, Rosyth, Fife.

Population

Dear GL,

I must take issue once more with Joe Weston's protestation (GL May) that population control is irrelevant. Surely Joe cannot seriously believe that population growth can continue exponentially, unless that is his faith in science and a 'new America' in the stars is greater than that of some of us more earthbound mortals.

If not, then he must accept that population stabilisation will have to set in at some point. How this is to be achieved humanely and sanely should therefore continue to exercise our brains.

Alice Page
Swithland Hall, Loughborough, Leics.

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Greens in Italy

Ian McCarthy writes from Italy:

ITALY HAS LOTS of green lists, but not a green party. This has been repeated many times at the various meetings held in preparation for the local and regional elections in May. The national co-ordination of the green lists is composed of local and autonomous groups some of whom already have representation in local councils and are now trying for the regional councils, and many others standing for the first time.

The electoral system in Italy permits any group with 3% of the votes to have representation. The seats are divided between the different lists according to the percentage of votes cast. This leads to a much more volatile (and confused) situation than in Britain, and gives the greens a fair chance for some success. In fact, after the advances of the greens in Germany, and with the news of environmental disasters like the imminent death of the Adriatic in the news every day, the greens have become the focus of enormous attention from the national press. And

green lists are being presented in almost all the regions and in most of the big cities in the May elections.

Despite the general agreement about not being a party, however, differences have arisen within the movement and were much in evidence at the national meeting in Florence in February. The disagreements were about the degree of centralisation and the political style to adopt.

The main bone of contention was the proposal to establish a national committee of spokespersons to talk to the press and television. The idea itself was questioned: was it right to use the mass media, especially television? Was it not inherently anti-green? Was it anti-green to include on the committee people recycled from other political parties (mostly radicals, communists and ultra-leftists). The strange strategies of the Radical Party complicate matters as they approve of green lists and are melting into them in many places.

The differences are in some ways similar to those in Germany between realists and fundamentalists, between green greens and red greens, between anarchists and marxists, between city people and country people. In fact the main divergence seemed to be between people with a political past and methods brought over from conventional parties (the majority) and people with roots in the Earth, the back-to-the-land New Age people who are less interested in 'winning' and more interested in getting a deeper message across. These two groups were aptly described by one speaker as "the pipes and the drums", the first playing a melody colourful and poetical, and the second drumming a challenge to the powers-that-be.

Perhaps the two are not irreconcilable but there remains a fundamental difference between those who would change the structures and those who would change themselves.

The Centre itself is a large house in the middle of Servigliano, a small market town. There are also two communities directly linked to the Centre, and several other family groups actively involved, in the surrounding countryside. It exists to sustain, encourage and propose the return to the Earth and to a more simple life in harmony with nature and with ourselves, for everyone - but with special attention to the young and 'disadvantaged'.

It aims:

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:: to encourage a respect for Mother Earth and an awareness of what she needs to sustain all life, including human life

:: to promote the development of human potential and cultural and spiritual growth, especially for the underprivileged

:: to launch new projects for self-managed rural communities

:: to offer a documentation service on themes such as ecology, peace, social change, agriculture, alternative energy, etc.

:: to offer a salespoint for whole-food products

:: to organise meetings and courses and coordinate activities between the various 'alternative' experiences in the area.

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S E London Green Fair

Graham Bell writes:

I've always felt that a libertarian green society (which I feel has got to be based on learning how to make peaceful anarchy work) would never be allowed by governments. The Ecology Party seemed to me one way of taking the Green message to those who govern us. The safety for our future is so insecure that I believe we have to use all the other means as well - direct action, lobbying, education, personal adjustment of our lives to green principles. Word of mouth seems to me to change a lot more than pieces of paper. Out of this came the idea for the Green Fair.

My local party (Greenwich and Lewisham) were keen, and the more we talked with people the more we found others with the same idea who were not quite sure how to make it work. Our solution was to go straight through people's fears by suggesting an impossibly wide-reaching project that we would make possible by involving everyone Green we could think of.

Within weeks we had a mailing list of hundreds of groups. We started by approaching a couple of dozen, and a meeting in November yielded envoys from SERA, a local church, UNA, Lewisham CND, Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, WFLOE and Eco.

We now have an organising collective of 35 (23 at last meeting!) with representatives from other groups: animal rights, disability projects, PPU, FoE, London Wildlife Trust and a dozen others. Work is shared and decisions are collective. We've made links with Black and Trade Union groups, and included special provision for senior citizens and the disabled. As I write we're living in hopes of GLC funding - the great loving Council having done us the compliment of copying the event as well!

What have we ended up with? Sustained enthusiasm, a really committed group of workers, the press keen as mustard. What else could get rave responses from the Green Anarchist and a Conservative MP? Peggy Seeger's coming. So are: Bromley Silver Band, Two Morris Sides, Frank Chickens, Jonathon Porritt, Mike Power, Janet Johnstone (Amnesty), Veronica Kelly (WRI), the Bishop of Woolwich, Peter Tatchell, Jean Lambert, Jane Goldsmith, Wilmette Brown, Adrian Atkinson, Peter Roffey, Lord Melchett, Janice

Owens, Circus Minimus, Lewis Herbert (GLC), Paul Ekins, Richard Body, Penny Auty, Peter Draper, and me and all my friends.

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

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Marched for a Safe Future

AMID ALL CND'S publicity for the marches to Molesworth, the independently organised 'March for a Safe Future' from Sizewell to Molesworth hardly got a media mention. Chris Savory reports:

We congregated on the beach at Sizewell in the shadow of Sizewell "A" on March 28, the anniversary of the accident at Three Mile Island. The festival atmosphere and the beautiful Suffolk countryside seemed incongruous with the possibility of Britain's first PWR being built here. Our aim was to make the link between nuclear power and nuclear weapons more publicly known: the main points being that without reactors there would be no plutonium for nuclear weapons, that nuclear disarmament would only be viable in the long term if we rid ourselves of all nuclear technology, and that the 'nuclear state' can only exist in secrecy and with severe curtailments of our civil liberties. Our other aim was to try and show that other ways of living are possible and desirable.

The procession was led by a beautiful windmill mounted on two bicycles, which together with our banners and rainbow streamers made for a colourful and exciting impact. The warmth and sharing amongst the marchers and the many lovely people who gave us invaluable support along the way was the highlight of the walk - and helped us over the blisters, the stomach bugs and the rain.

The difficulty of effectively communicating with people in the villages and towns along the way was for me the most frustrating part of the walk. We had a great welcome in 'nuclear-free' Cambridge, and the council refused to accept a Cruise missile and a drum of nuclear waste from us! We had a rest day and then on Good Friday set off with the CND march to Molesworth. A great spirit had developed amongst the walkers, and the only sad thing was that we broke up rather haphazardly in the huge crowds at Molesworth.

I think for most of us the march was a great tonic and a great buzz - it put the life back into many wilting activists, and I think that the energy generated will ensure that the 'March for a Safe Future' will go on long after the crowds dispersed from Molesworth on Easter Monday.

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Thames Street, Oxford :: 727207

Network in Brief

THE EASTER WHEAT FUND at Molesworth collected a total of £25,659: £15,000 of this was spent on grain now in Ethiopia, while the balance has been sent in cash to buy grain and seed grain for the Eritreans. A SUMMER WORKCAMP is being held at the Old School House June 14-30, with meals at £1 a day: write in advance (Old School House, Clopton, Northants.) And there are plans afoot for a SUMMER SCHOOL OF PEACE STUDIES July 4-14

HERE TODAY - HERE TOMORROW is the title of an informative campaign booklet published by FoE on the future for buses. 60p from FoE, 377 City Road, London EC1.

LABOUR LAND CAMPAIGN is holding a national conference on Land Abuse in Britain: the Socialist Case for Reform. Fee £2.50/£1. Creche. Info: 71 Glenwood Close, Harrow, Middx HA1 2QN (01-427 2940). June 15, County Hall London, 10.30 - 5.

THE DENDROLOGIST (ed. Merelene Davis) is a tree magazine for Berks, Bucks, Oxon and W Herts. They are compiling a list of people with trees available for others to plant out, and would like to cooperate with tree-interested people in other regions.

KETTERING ALTERNATIVE FAIR is in the Corn Market, June 8 10-5. Live music and theatre. 0933 313706.

MAORI SOVEREIGNTY, the book reviewed in GL31 which we hoped to distribute in this country, is out of print in New Zealand. A reprint is possible; meanwhile we cannot get copies.

A GREEN PICNIC is happening at Wm Curtis Ecological Park, 16 Vine St, London SE1 on Sat June 8. All welcome: bring food to share.

GLASGOW ECOLOGY GROUP would like to form an urban eco-household. Write to Steven Grist, 5 Wolfe Avenue, Crookfur, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 6TQ.

SOUTHSEA COMMON to Greenham Common: a march for women and children, from August 3-4. Join the walk, or the campsites near Winchester and Whitchurch. Help needed en route. No illegal actions. Contact Lynette Rees, 10 Northcote Road, Southsea, Hants (Tel Portsmouth 829390).

SWANSEA GREEN GROUP has a new contact address: 19 Sway Road, Morriston, Swansea. Phone Rhonwen (796717) or Nigel (470004).

STROUD GREEN FESTIVAL May 31/June 1. Subscription Rooms, 10-5. Stalls, exhibits, trees exhibition, talks, workshops, creche, wholefood cafe. Guest speakers Fri evening: Satish Kumar and Herbert Girardet. Sat evening: ceilidh. Stroud 70962.

Green Line Mail Order

Pamphlets and Books

POLITICS FOR LIFE (Ecology Party, 36pp). 50p / 5 for £2.

SOCIALISM AND ECOLOGY, Raymond Williams (SERA 20pp). 75p.

DEMOCRACY AND PARLIAMENT, Raymond Williams (Socialist Society, 32pp) 90p.

COAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (Wales Ecology Party, 16pp), 20p.

FOOD ADDITIVES (Wales Ecology Party, 20pp). 30p.

FAIR VOTES GUIDE (Campaign for Fair Votes, 32pp). 95p.

EMBRACE THE EARTH, Jonathon Porritt et al. (Green CND, 44pp). 90p / 5 for £3.50.

ETHICS AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS, Jeremy Naydler (Fox and Lantern Press, 22pp). £1.

GREEN SONGS (Evergreen Press, 24pp). Words and music. 50p.

SURVIVAL OF CIVILISATION, John Hamaker. 236pp paperback, £6.95.

THE OTHER ECONOMIC SUMMIT (1984). Report and Summary. 40pp. 70p.

NITRATE POLLUTION: Prevention or Cure? Bob Allen (Green Line, 4 pp). 10p.

BRANDT REPORT: Con Trick. Richard Hunt. (Green Line, 4pp). 10p.

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