

GREEN LINE

500 years of Nation State
Lunar festivals
Die Grünen: re-thinking
the means

Green Party: what's in a name?

No.36 October 1985 40p

HOW?



GREEN LINE

Green Line, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford

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Monthly magazine of
Green politics and lifestyle

Subscription • 10 issues £5 (unwaged £4)

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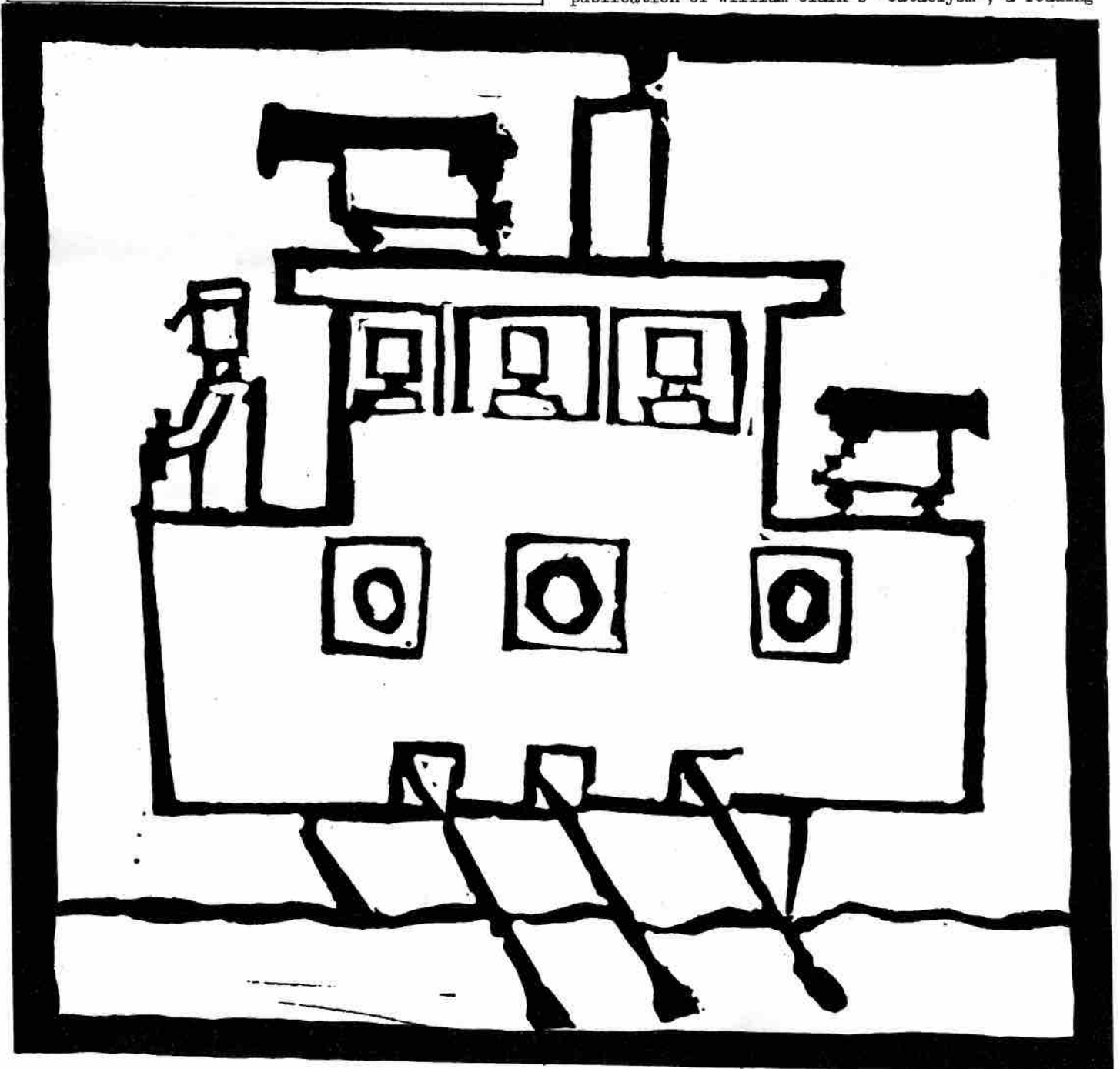
1485 ~ 1985

500 YEARS OF THE NATION-STATE

REVOLUTIONS ARE ABOUT the nature of government. Our centralised nation-state is not given us by nature: it was invented by a self-interested monarchy, and the decisive act was a battle that took place just 500 years ago - an anniversary almost totally overlooked in Britain today. PETER CADOGAN traces the early history of the nation-state as invented by the Tudors, and draws conclusions for those who would seek a revolutionary transformation of the system of government we have inherited.

AT VERY INFREQUENT intervals - i.e. every few hundred years - any people who have emerged from tribalism are likely to face traumatic political experiences, a conquest or a revolution that transforms not just the policies but the political structures of their society. This has not happened to us since 1648 so we are liable to forget it, certainly to discount it. Since it can happen again in the coming decade it may be time to dust off the past and have a look at the process.

The matter has a certain urgency. Last year saw the publication of William Clark's "Cataclysm", a reading



by someone who was for twelve years Vice-President of the World Bank of the impending Third World credit crisis compounded by the US deficit. He dates the collapse of confidence and of "the system" at 1987. Bankers and politicians have a special genius for buying time, so it is a bold man who puts dates to his predictions, but Clark has done it and there is no better opinion to hand. We are well advised to take note - to say the least.

The constitutional question is simply put. What happens if as a result of military disaster or financial collapse people cease to have any confidence in any political party or in the institutions of Westminster or Whitehall themselves? Back in the 1920s this question was seriously considered at the highest level and a shadow government structure, the RSGs (Regional Seats of Government), was set up designed to take over if and when central government failed. In those years "the enemy" was envisaged as a political general strike. After 1945 the system was revamped to face the prospect of nuclear war and so it remains to the present day. In the film "Threads" we saw it in operation.

For us, however, the question is: What is the green or alternative answer to the collapse of the present system? How and when did it come into being and why? The answer to the first question is not the subject of this article; so suffice it to say that it has something to do with thorough East-West demilitarisation and decentralisation, regionalisation, confederation, direct volunteer-democracy, nonviolent insurrection and the gift economy. It has nothing to do with proportional representation, which may or may not be a stage we have to go through before people see that the representative democracy of the nation-state is a mask for the military-industrial complex. Everything is "fixed", but even so such fixing, with certain attendant civil liberties, is a great improvement on the feudal chaos and personal absolutism it replaced. How did we get our present "fix"?

No matter how drastic a political-financial disaster may be, life has to go on. Beneath all political and economic phenomena there is a biological necessity. Answers have to be found, and if none of the old ones work then new ones have to be invented. Invention, culturally inherited, is the heart of our humanity, the feature that distinguishes us from the rest of the animal kingdom. The Tudors invented our nation-state because they had to, or die.

ORIGINS

Given the Roman evacuation and the Anglo-Saxon-Danish settlement, England has had three major constitutional traumas - 1066, 1485, 1642/48, and their sequels, and three lesser upsets, 1381, 1688 and 1832 - as the result of which our forms of government have been altered beyond recognition save for the retention of labels. (Thus we use the word Parliament to describe three very different institutions, the High Court of Parliament up to 1642, the Parliament of the propertied interest up to 1832, and the reformed Parliament that we have had since then.)

There is a distinction between the nation and the nation-state. A nation is created by the coming together of a group of tribes that have the same or similar language, law, custom and religion. They acknowledge a common king and he is accorded a first-among-equals status in conjunction with his great lords, all of whom have and retain their own jurisdictions, resources and arms. The king had no centralised monopoly of power over force or supply. Money is marginal. The system turns on the power of the sword, oaths of fealty, prestige, custom, military

and labour services. Wealth turns upon the holding and use of land (and those who work it), not on its ownership. "Tenure" meant what it said.

In the case of English and European chivalry the system was massively reinforced and sanctioned by the expertise of the Roman church and the industry of the monks. The sword nevertheless decided and the system survived, with constant changes, until the point at which it became impossibly internecine, as it did in England in the period of the Hundred Years War and the immediately subsequent 30-war Wars of the Roses. By 1485 something new had to happen if civil war was not to become endemic. It happened.

England was not alone. A similar process took place in Portugal, Spain and France at almost exactly the same time. The four new nation-states then launched the first four empires in the East and West Indies and beyond, taking full advantage of the great inventions of the period, gunpowder, the compass needle, cast cannon, and the printing press. Henry



VIII and his ship-wrights invented the gun-deck. The conquistadores arrived.

The critical moment for this country was on August 22, a Saturday, 1485 when on Bosworth Field, east of Leicester, Richard III of York fell to Henry Tudor of Lancaster. It might have been just one more battle; all depended on what the victor made of it. And today, much depends on what we make of what he made of it.

TRIVIALISATION AND BAD HISTORY

It is a measure of English historical philistinism that on the exact day of the 500th anniversary the best the BBC could do was to feature a childish argument between apparently serious historians as to the exact location of the battle site, while at Bosworth itself the local pundits of pageantry recreated the battle for the benefit of tourists and the sheer fun of the thing. Of serious comment anywhere there appeared to be none, nor would the Times publish a mild reminder and reproof when it was offered by the present writer.

Part of the trouble lies with our historians who have fought each other for years over this and related questions. The question is: when was the cardinal turning point in the political evolution of modern England/Britain? There are at least four **different** answers to that question:

- (1) with Henry VII's achievement, reinforced by his son's enterprise, over the church, the monasteries and Wales. This was received opinion for about 300 years following Francis Bacon's "The Reign of King Henry the Seventh" (1621). But today's standard life of Henry VII by Professor Chrimes tries to reduce Henry VII to a constitutional cipher.
- (2) with Thomas Cromwell and the reforming Parliament of the 1530s, on behalf of Henry VIII. A torrent of books and papers from the able pen of G R Elton has put this case.
- (3) with Christopher Hill and the school he bred from Oxford, focussing all attention on the English Revolution of 1642/48, the Civil War and the defeat of the Divine Right of Kings - 'the good old cause'.
- (4) with the Enlightenment's point of view that gave all the credit to 1688, the Act of Settlement and

John Locke.

Yet we should know by now (especially in the light of John Rawls' "A Theory of Justice") that we are liable to do great disservice to the truth if we present it in either/or fashion and take the acceptance of one proposition to exclude all others. They may all be true, or partly true, in different ways and in a given order. Furthermore it is unhistorical to make comparisons between different periods in the same culture. History is layered and each layer presumes the reality of its antecedents. So all four English schools are right enough, but wrong in putting each other down. To understand the English constitution we need a five-hundred-year view, not one limited to a couple of decades. We are back with the familiar problem of specialists knowing more and more about less and less.

WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LEARN FROM IT?

First, the incredible boldness of the enterprise. In August 1485 Henry Tudor, aged 28, set out from the Seine with a mere 2000 men (a quarter of the Norman force in 1066) to conquer a kingdom. What kind of man was he?

His life was extraordinary from the moment of birth, when his mother was 13 years old and his father already dead. His mother then left him in Pembroke Castle with his uncle Jasper, the Earl of Pembroke, who brought him up to have only one all-consuming passion, to master the art and craft of kingship and make himself king of England. War, wine, women, hunting and pageantry were not for Henry Tudor unless they promised to yield dividends of kingship. He would then take them and discard them. His singleness of mind was quite amazing. He saw to everything himself. To this day the surviving accounts of his household display the royal monogram against single detailed items.

Second, the consolidation of every step taken. Nothing was ever taken for granted. His sheer persistence of purpose, for 22 of the 24 years of his reign, was quite unremitting. (In his last two years he was dying of TB and the royal powers were much abused by Empson and Dudley, soon despatched by Henry VIII.) His object was to translate a military victory into a new political system that would stand the test of time and underwrite his dynasty.

The essential problem he had to crack was that of the military. To start with he lowered his sights; no Plantagenet dreams of a French imperium for Henry Tudor. He hung onto Calais and limited his continental military involvement to balance of power exercises especially in relation to France and Brittany, immediate neighbours with whom he was personally and strategically involved. (He spent his first 14 years in Wales, the next 13 in Brittany, and one final year in France.)

He knew he would face any number of Yorkist plots at home and some would, and did, lead to battlefield confrontation. With what kind of army would he face them? He came up with a unique and original answer. The norm of the age was an army of mercenaries. Knight's service had been dead for about 200 years. However, he lacked the means to raise and pay a professional army, so that option was not open to him. It awaited the days of Oliver Cromwell 150 years later.

For over 200 years, in default of Knight's service, troops had been raised under the Assize of Arms (by which all able-bodied men were to be armed and in a state of military readiness) and by Commissions of Array, a call-up process organised county by county technically through the King's Sheriffs but, with the

decay of that office, more commonly through local magnates who would just as soon command their troops' allegiance as the king's. So the effect of Commissions of Array had been to feed civil war through mandating armed baronial retinues.

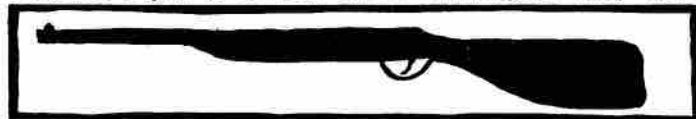
VOLUNTEERS AGAINST OVER-MIGHTY SUBJECTS

If however armed retinues of great magnates could be successfully outlawed and the national levy (a development of the ancient Saxon fyrd) raised and led by a new body of officers directly answerable to the king, the answer would be a new post-feudal, national military instrument. True, it would have to be paid for, but on a temporary basis only - it would not be a standing army. It was to be raised only to meet particular emergencies like the Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck rebellions or to send a small expeditionary force to help the Duke of Brittany against the King of France - and then dissolved. The only standing forces were the new fifty-strong Yeomen of the Guard modelled on that of the French court and the Calais Garrison of 800 paid for by the Company of the Staple and therefore not a charge on the royal exchequer.

The king and his successor governed through the Council (numbering between four and forty, called at the royal pleasure), the courts of the royal prerogative (i.e. of Star Chamber) (1487), Requests, General Surveyors (the heart of his financial success), Wards and Liveries, the Councils of the North and Wales, and Augmentations (through which Thomas Cromwell disposed of the assets of the monasteries) and High Commission (the prerogative court of the Church after the king assumed its supreme headship). There is no constitutional dividing line between the two reigns in 1509. The first Tudor squeezed, turned and adapted every likely medieval institution to serve the purpose of that new kind of conciliar absolutism that was our original nation-state. He then invented when he had to. It was ruthlessly and bloodily done, but executions of rebel leaders were followed by blanket pardons.

It did an essential negative task in putting an end to feudal-baronial chaos and civil war. It did extraordinary positive work a new emergent complex of volunteers whose motives were an amazing mixture of greed, ambition, scholarship and service. The volunteers were the rising gentry, the yeomen, the Justices of the Peace, the Merchant Adventurers (burgeoning on the wool trade especially) and the rising class of lawyers, scholars, artists and clerics bred of the Renaissance and the new print-shop.

Before Henry set sail from the Seine he had established his Chamber and Household, the heart of his administration, staffed with "the new men" - and they remained loyal to him for life. Principal among them



were Reginald Bray, Giles Daubeney, Richard Guilford, Thomas Lovell and John Risely. Once enthroned he made full use of bishops - they were rich, educated, and carefully preferred (i.e. promoted) by stages to ensure continuing loyalty: John Morton (Ely, Canterbury and Cardinal), William Warham (London, Canterbury, Lord Chancellor), and Richard Fox (Oxford lawyer, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Bishop of Exeter).

Under the Act Pro Camera Stellata, setting up the Star Chamber in 1487, and the later Statute of Retainers, Henry ruled out liveries (the uniforming of

retinues) and maintenance (their supply and support) On one occasion he was right royally entertained by his loyal subject the Earl of Oxford who had clearly not understood the new law. He proudly paraded his retainers in their livery and was promptly fined 15,000 marks! (A mark was two-thirds of a pound).

Justices of the Peace had "arrived" in England in 1361 when they were empowered to conduct the new Quarter Sessions which were responsible not only for justice but also the administration of provincial England. They were all volunteers and were drawn from the 20 to 25 families that dominated each county. The Tudors greatly increased their powers and number. Petty Sessions were added to Quarter Sessions and their ranks and power were massively reinforced by the acquisition of the monastic lands after 1535/9. Some 2000 families then governed England for the next 300 years until the industrial revolution finally broke their political power in the 1880s. After 150 years "the new men" were powerful enough to challenge the Tudor and Stuart absolutism that had done so much to make them, and the Revolution of 1642/8 was the result. The eventual upshot was a constitutional monarchy tailored to the requirements of the propertied classes. We have it still. The JPs of England administered the peace, and officered the wars, of Henry VII and VIII.

OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AND EMPIRE

The Tudor origins of the established Church of England we know all about - but what of the civil service and the Empire? The civil service (the civil heart of any government) is originally mandated by the sword, but turns in practice on efficiency of administration, especially in the getting and spending of taxes and all other forms of state income. Henry VIII's civil service centred on the staffing of his Chamber (above stairs with access to his person - the Body) and the Household (below stairs and directed outwards to the whole kingdom). The king was obsessed by detail and his system worked very well indeed - he left a sound financial inheritance to his son.

But his son, however, detested administration and by 1525 his affairs were in such a state of chaos that he summoned Cardinal Wolsey to his Palace of Eltham to sort them out. Six months' work produced a new administrative system, the principles of which were set out in the Statutes and Ordinances of Eltham of January 1526. Sinecures were abolished, job specifications were laid down, duties were specified, regular attendance made mandatory, promotion to be by seniority, sickness and old age provided for, and the first Secretary of State appointed. The modern civil service had begun.

Imperially the story is much less happy. If the Tudors in practice abandoned major continental ambitions (although Wolsey aspired to be Pope and Henry VIII to be the Holy Roman Emperor!) the compensated by their fateful focus on the building of England's first modern empire - not usually acknowledged as such in England - i.e. the conquest of Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Henry VII began it with Poyning's Law in 1494. Sir Edward Poyning's was Henry's Irish Lord Deputy, with a foothold in the Pale of Dublin and not much else. Most of Ireland was then a mass of clan chieftainships. There was an Irish parliament, and this new law limited its effect in order to reinforce English sovereignty and keep the Yorkists out. In 1534 the law was amended. The parliament was only to meet with the king's consent and its legislative programme had to have the approval of the king in council. Since 1494 another Act had ruled that English law obtained in Ireland. Britain's

internal colonisation as a nation-imperial state had begun.

Wales of course had been partly conquered in the 13th century; but half the country, the eastern half, was under the Marcher Lords and a law unto itself. Henry VIII put through two Acts of Union in 1536 and 1543, imposed the English county system of government on Wales as a whole, and put down the Welsh language. The Welsh tragedy was underwritten by the semi-Welsh identity of the Tudors, and the fact that 3000 Welshmen had joined the first Tudor to help ensure his first victory at Bosworth.

Scotland was an entirely sovereign state and closely allied with France. It was that alliance that led to the Scottish demand that Henry VIII withdraw from France (where he was embattled with Louis XII). Henry's reply was to attack Scotland and defeat the Scots at Flodden in September 1513. For the rest of his long reign Henry was almost continuously warring with Scotland to no great effect. Eventual English success went by the devious route of a common dynasty in 1603, the Battle of Dunbar in 1650, the Act of Union of 1707, Culloden in 1746, and the Clearing of the Highlands.

Today the freedom of England turns up on the freedom of these three internal colonies. They are the black side of the Tudor revolution and its Stuart consequences.

This is an article, not a book, and the story has recently been retold in two excellent new works in the Longmans series on the foundations of modern Britain: "The Transformation of Medieval England 1370 - 1529" by John A F Thomson, and "The Emergence of a Nation State 1529 - 1660" by Alan G R Smith.

THE LESSONS FOR US?

Firstly, if we have to face a political trauma ourselves it is important that we mine the experiences of 1485-plus and the 1640s.

Secondly, a successful revolution calls for extraordinary boldness, imagination and singleness of mind. It is supported and opposed by people of all classes. The problem is one of ends and means. It is political, not economic. The issue is the nature of government - decision-making, accountability, service and solidarity.

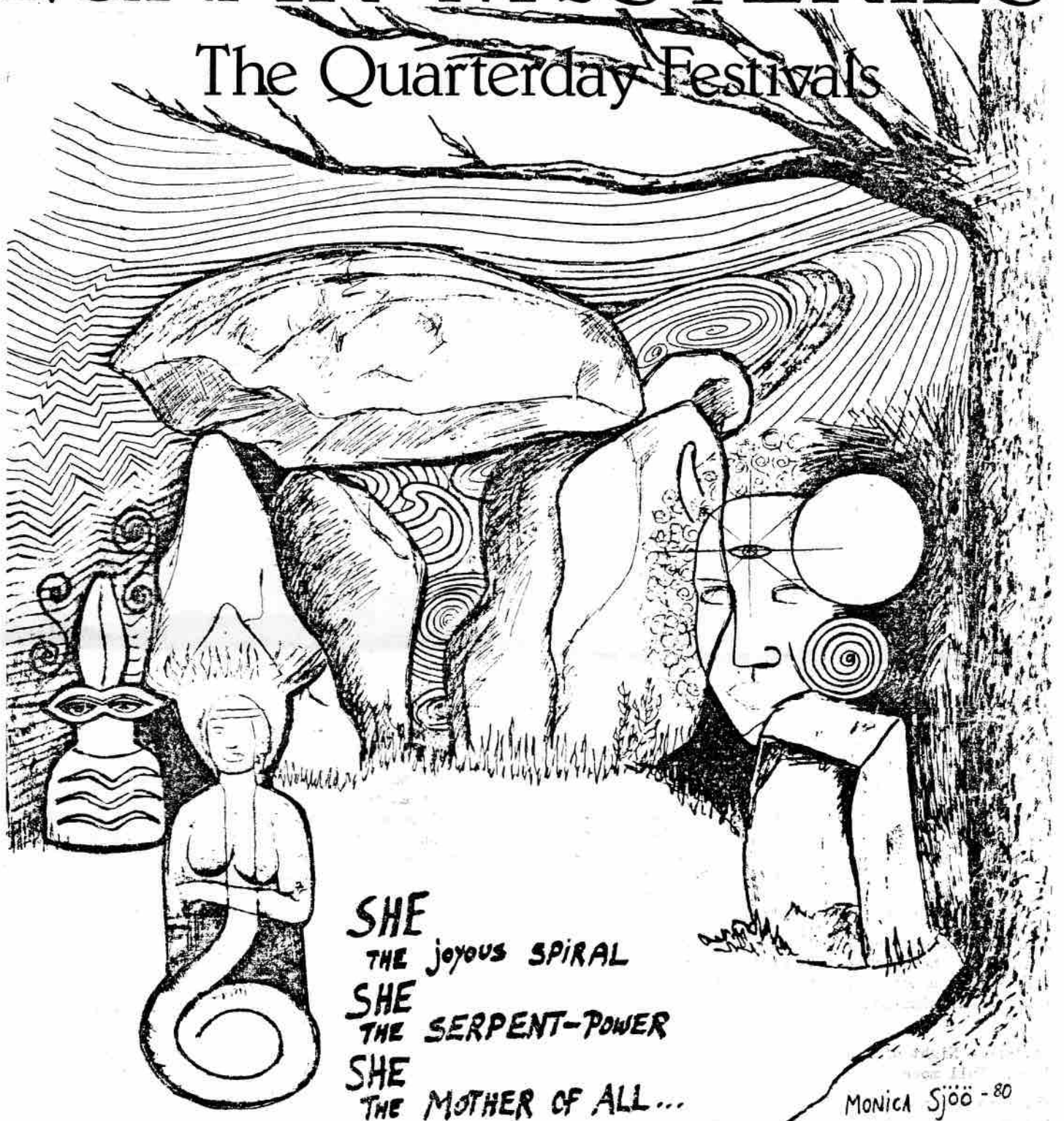
Third: the centralised nation-state we have today is not given by nature. It was invented by the Tudors for their own reasons and re-invented by the Cromwellians likewise. It is a political artifice whose purpose, if now served (through the collapse of empires, the end of war as a workable instrument of politics, and the exhaustion of the Fabian-Keynesian lease) becomes expendable.

Fourth: our last two revolutions (1485 and 1648) increased the number and improved the quality of the governing classes. They also ensured the continued subjection of the great majority. In the last analysis a revolution depends on those who are willing and able to govern. This means that political evolution is subject to class and educational limitations. Of what are we capable now? Will the next revolution (possible nonviolent) be about universal emancipation in Britain or about the power of a new and broader elite?

Sir Thomas More gave us an aristocratic vision in his "Utopia" (1516), the Levellers gave us the idea of democracy in "The Agreement of the People" (1647) and the Diggers "The Law of Freedom" (1649/52). Our gift turns partly on how well we re-read them now.

LUNAR MYSTERIES

The Quarterday Festivals



SHE
THE JOYOUS SPIRAL
SHE
THE SERPENT-POWER
SHE
THE MOTHER OF ALL...

Monica Sjöö - 80

MONICA SJÖÖ looks into the ancient and inner meaning of the pagan quarterday festivals. She shows that they are as relevant to us today as they ever were... that is, if we want to partake in, give energies to, and receive energies from the living Earth and Cosmos.

forsake the Goddess and her son, the Horned One, in their seasonal changes.

The lunar quarterday festivals represent the dissolution of boundaries between the physical and the spiritual, leading to higher states of consciousness. These were the times - along with the solstices and the equinoxes - for the undertaking of shamanistic journeys into other realities. They were celebrated at traditional sacred sites where the cyclic breathing of the eternal Earth spirit is experienced especially powerfully.

For the Celts the year began with the descent into the

TO MANY OF us feminists aware of the Goddess within us and in the Universe, radical pagans, greens and generally lovers of the Earth our Mother, the celebration of the ancient festivals is becoming increasingly important. The Wise Women (and men) - the wicce / witches - went to the stake rather than

Dark Womb of Winter at Samhain - the time when the seeds descend into the Dark Earth to germinate within Her dark and moist womb. Night time was to them the source of light and not the death of light: to them the Dark Mother was the source of inspirations and visions. The Celts still used the Lunar Calendar of 13 months that they inherited from the earlier neolithic peoples who had so lovingly built the stone circles and sacred mounds of these islands. The Ancients lived through a yearly cyclic rhythm which renewed their inner resources as well as making them intimately at one with the Earth's living body in Her changes.

Imbolc - Bride/Brigid-day.

On the night to the 1st of February of the waxing New Moon.

Imbolc means "yew's milk" and this is the time of abundance of animal foods and a surplus of milk. Bride is the White Cow, and all animal mothers are sacred to Her as are plants and trees.

This is the Spring Festival celebrating the re-emergence of Bride/Brigid as young maiden from the mountain-fastness of her Mother Cailleach, who is the Crone of Winter and Death. Cailleach (this northern Kali is black as the soil and blue as the underground waters) of the burial mounds and the high Scottish mountains drinks of the well of youth and is thereby transformed into Bride, Her maiden self. This is a Celtic version of the Mysteries of Demeter and Kore, of the mother and daughter, of life, death and rebirth.

To Cailleach the Giantess belong the cromlechs and standing stones which, according to legend, She dropped out of Her apron. She is the Skadi/Scotia, the third Norn of Scandinavian/Germanic belief, who cuts the thread of life and who punishes gods and men at Ragnarök for having betrayed the ways of the Mother/Wyrd or Urd/Earth Herself.

Bride is said to emerge as a serpent from the mound and when She dips Her fingers in the waters they begin to warm. This is the time for planting, and the seeds within the Earth start to germinate.

Images of straw are made in Her likeness and She is taken into the homes of the peasantry. She was once the Great Goddess of pre-celts and celts alike. Brigid is the Goddess of the perpetual sacred Flame, the Fire of germination, of holy and healing wells and waters, of poetry, smithcraft and cattle.

At Candlemas (February 2nd) the Catholic Church celebrates the purification of the Virgin Mary, and torches and candles are lit at midnight. Here is the Fire of Illumination.

Beltane - Night of the May Queen, Goddess of sexual love. Full moon of the night to the 1st of May.

This was the night of the celebration of the sacred marriage between the Goddess and Her son/lover and the time for the kindling of the fires on the Beltane Hills thereby bringing the Fire back to Earth. (Glastonbury Tor was such a hill.) Michael Dames thinks that ecstatic sexual rites took place on this night within Avebury stone circle. The Maypole symbolises both male and female sexual energies as did the dances around it. The people walked or danced the Maze or Labyrinth and the ritual dance movements acted on and with the Earth implanting sacred forms and patterns and thereby heightening Her fertility. The Labyrinth represents the windings, to the left and to the right, of the human brain and is the Womb and Still Centre of Death and Rebirth within the Mother. Fire, Earth forces and



Sexuality were brought together in the May night festival. The people jumped over the Fire and cattle were brought through it to be purified and cleansed. This was the time for initiations, and the Fire was alchemical and sacrificial.

This night many of the sacred Wells were thought to "Boil" for an hour at midnight, and multitudes of people slept by the Wells and drank of the miraculously healing Waters at this time. Dew was collected, this magical substance being the distilled essence of the Earth through the action of fire and heat.

Lammas - the Harvest Mother. Night to the first of August of the Waning Moon.

Fires were lit on the Lammas mounds (as at Silbury) where the people gathered to witness the birth of the Harvest child. Harvesting - the cutting of the corn - took place with the Waning Moon and the first fruits were offered to the Goddess as Earth Mother. This is the time when the Goddess withdraws into the mounds, the Earth, the Fairy hills with the coming of autumn.

She is transformed into Her Earth Mother aspect in the mounds and tombs. The forces that began to rise out of the Earth at Imbolc return now and re-enter into the Womb. Great Lammas Fairs were held with games and celebrations. Fermented alcohol/beer - seen as the essence of germination or a kind of watery fire of life - was used as a ritual element in the Lammas feast. This is the Fire that cooks, which used together with Water is transformative. There is a surplus of grain and vegetables.

Samhain/Halloween/All Souls Night/Cailleach.

On the night to the 1st of November of the Dark Moon.

From having been the Mother of Growth and the ripening

of fruit above the ground (Silbury) the Goddess now becomes the Mother within the Earth, Goddess of the Underworld, the Dead and the burial mounds (West Kennet Long Barrow). She is owl-faced Hecate leading the Dead in procession and dances by the crossroads. This is Summer's End and the Celtic New Year, and was a night of Mysteries and Divination. Oracular priestesses/Shamanesses made their prophecies for the coming year. The Samhain Fire burns away the dross and the ashes were scattered on the ground. This night the recent Dead (who were magically "alive" within the Mother of Death and Rebirth) visited their relatives and food was left out for them. This was a time of purifications, of trials by water and fire, of new beginnings and of the ritual of burning the effigy of the old year. Rituals were enacted at/in the burial mounds and shamanistic journeys were undertaken to the Underworld to gain oracular knowledge and healing powers.

This is the Dark Mother, most dreaded by the emerging Patriarchs who were totally out of tune with Her powers and energies, the energies of the menstruating and post-menopausal women of the tribes. But... to those who were in tune with Her powers She gave visions and the gift of prophecy, while She would give madness to those hostile to Her.

She is indeed the Dragon/serpent (or Monster, Leviathan) of Darkness and of the magnetic Underground Waters and the Dead who is again and again slain by the new Patriarchal Solar heroes. These violent champions of Patriarchy and Matricide will not ever be born voluntarily from the Womb of the Dark Mother, but set out to wrench their life from Her by rape and violence. Unwanted motherhood would never have occurred in the ancient world where the priestesses of the Goddess were healers and midwives and had knowledge of contraceptive herbal methods and of abortifacients.

Amongst the Scandinavians the Sun was the Goddess Nerthus - a Northern Bride bringing spring, warming of the waters, fertility and peace wherever She travelled across the land in Her solar wagon. Amongst the Celts and pre-Celts She was Grainne and Ainu.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

- + writings by Adam McLean on the festivals
- + writings on the Sun Goddess and about Bridghe/Bride by Janet McCrickard in Glastonbury
- + Monica Sjoo and Barbara Mor, "The Ancient Religion of the Great Cosmic Mother of All" (published 1981 by Rainbow Press, Trondheim, Norway: available from Monica Sjoo, 3 Dwr Bach, Jordanston, nr Fishguard, Dyfed, S Wales
- + "Goddesses of the North" - article by Monica Sjoo in 'Arachne', journal of the Matriarchy Research and Resource Network, c/o A Woman's Place, Victoria Embankment, Hungerford House, London WC2 (next issue at Lammas).
- + Michael Dames: "The Silbury Treasure - the Great Goddess Rediscovered" (1976) and "Avebury Circle" (1977), both published by Thames and Hudson.
- + the radical mixed pagan journals:
 - 'Weed and Water' (Holy Wells, ecology, the Goddess), c/o Jan Henning, 4 High Tor Close, Babbacombe Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 3LQ.
 - 'P A N' (Pagans Against Nukes), c/o Blaenberem, Mynyddcerrig, nr Llanelli, Dyfed, S Wales.
 Both are published four times a year at the Festivals.

Blessed Be.
Monica Sjoo.

Tŷ GWYDR GREENHOUSE



INFORMATION GWYBODAITH

GREENHOUSE is a radical centre in Bangor - perhaps the only project of its kind to have got past the drawing-board stage. PATRICK GREENFIELD talked to some of the people who've been involved from the outset.

MANY OF US have dreamed of setting up a centre in our own locality where a variety of green, feminist and radical groups could get together under one roof. Perhaps fewer of us know that such a place already exists, in Bangor, and has been thriving for a number of years. It's called the Greenhouse.

The idea grew in the Health Information Centre that used to operate from a rented room in the town. People from other groups used to gather there as well: a women's group, a food co-op, a community newspaper, a photographic collective, and a group promoting cycle routes throughout Snowdonia. They realised that if they co-operated they would be able to do things which none of them could do as individual groups - such as affording a telephone and always having someone there to answer it, to put it at its most basic. They chewed the project over for a year before they started work, and this period may have been one of the keys to their success. "It only worked because we knew each other and trusted each other first," said Mike Chown, who runs the Cyclerooutes group.

They were able to get a mortgage on a run-down building and have put in a great deal of work renovating it themselves. Other groups began to move in. FoE were there while they were at a low ebb, and then moved on to their own premises. Outreach was there for a year, involved in co-operative development in neighbouring areas, and when they moved out again it was without detriment to the whole. A person with a dynamic project can come in and use the facilities,

such as the man who wanted to improve the local playground. Working from the Greenhouse he was able to impress the local council sufficiently that they have taken up his ideas. Other groups, including networkers, Conservation Volunteers, Gay Line and others have moved in and are still there.

The Greenhouse has not only strengthened the groups who got together to set it up; it has allowed new things to happen which could not have happened before.



The name is not meant to imply any political leaning. The concept is of a glasshouse, where seeds may germinate and tender young plants get a start in life. It's defined simply as a "space for voluntary groups". Nevertheless there is, and always was, a strong leaning towards ecology. "Like the Welsh flag," said Mike. "Red, white and green - politics, spirit and environment." This mixture has led the marxists to drop out, because they felt that anything not working directly for the revolution was a waste of time. A problem for some others has been the involvement of "New Age" spiritual types, whom the activists tend to see as politically suspect. The two paths, spiritual and political, have gone on in parallel, co-existing rather than integrating.

"There is not a hierarchy of issues," says Sarah Andrews. "I needed to know that they were all being done. Having them all under one roof means that I can look and see if anyone needs help. People who are into one thing, who may not see the connection between nuclear weapons and sexist language, begin to understand." Chris Walker, whose speciality is Planetary Management, linking such groups as Oxfam, VSO, Amnesty, and international ecological groups, joked that you can't even take a cup of coffee in peace at the Greenhouse. "You put in the coffee and someone tells you you're ripping off the Third World. You add milk and the vegans are on to you. You reach for the sugar and the health nuts pounce!"

Helen Miles became involved in the Greenhouse primarily as a feminist, and the experience has led her into things she would not have got into otherwise. The same can't be said of all the women who come into the Women's Centre. "There are radical lesbians," she said, "who find it difficult to share space. They accept the situation because without the Greenhouse they wouldn't have any space at all. The enforced sharing hasn't changed their consciousness because they've managed to keep separate. There are two entrances to the building." The tensions between the women and the rest of the Greenhouse came out particularly when they wanted a women-only day for the whole house. "People had to face their feelings," said Sarah. "In the end it happened on several floors but not the whole house. It was a very good day."

It's been extremely hard work, and most of this work has fallen on far too few shoulders. "Just running it is much harder work than we thought it would be," said Sarah. "As it expanded we've had to learn skills normally found only in business management. We've had to work in a much more structured way. We're no longer pioneering now, so some of the group passion has gone and fewer people are coming in to help. But the Greenhouse is still doing everything we dreamed of it."

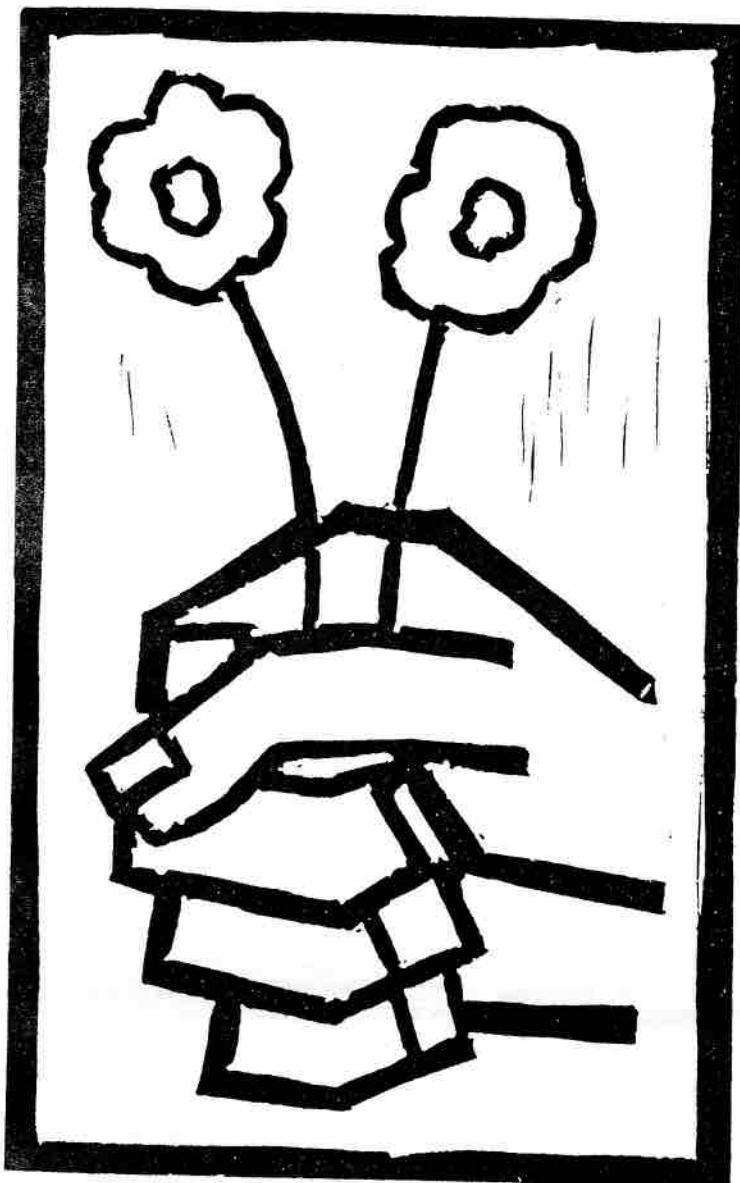
The work done on the building has doubled its value, so now there's an opportunity to remortgage and get a computer. "My aspiration," said Mike, "is for it to get smaller and smaller, a series of little centres linked by computer." In fact he has already bought a second building 15 miles away. "The question of the moment," said Sarah, "is: To compute or not to compute? Those of us who have worked there for a long time want to, mainly to communicate, to share our resource list with other groups. A young group, including Buddhists and anarchists, oppose it. As we always work by consensus this will take us a long time. But I'm not knocking consensus - it's served us well."

Perhaps the second key to the Greenhouse's success is its flexibility, its ability to change according to the needs of the time rather than hanging onto a concept of what it should be. The emphasis seems to be switching more and more to networking - putting people and groups in touch with one another - whether computerised or not. At the same time Chris noted a shrinking in the spread of interest groups actively involved, and he wonders whether this reflects a nationwide drop in energy, as seen in CND. He also sees the Greenhouse becoming less idealistic and "leading edge", and more practical and relevant to the local community. Language is a case in point. In Bangor the first language is Welsh, whereas the Greenhouse is predominantly English; but this is gradually changing, and the house is now 30% Welsh speaking.



Every locality is unique, and though the Greenhouse is doing well in Bangor it may not be useful to think of it as a model of what can be done in other towns and villages. But those of us who feel the need to make better use of the human resources in our own areas can take inspiration and encouragement from its existence, and maybe start working towards something similar at home.

** Anyone wanting to know more about how the Greenhouse was financed should contact Mike Chown, The Greenhouse, Trevelyan Terrace, Bangor, Gwynedd.



parliamentary strategy. In this article, translated for GL by NICK GLEESON, fundi SARAL SARKAR looks at the differences between the two 'camps' and argues that the real weakness of the radicals is their inability to translate their utopian objectives into practical steps which can be taken here and now by a popular movement. Saral Sarkar came to Germany from his native India in 1981, and is working on a history of the green, peace and alternative movements in West Germany for the United Nations University. He is a freelance journalist, and has worked in the Green Party office in Cologne.

I AM A 'FUNDI'. In Hamburg, at the Federal Conference of Die Grünen, I voted for the Bahro-Trampert motion.⁽¹⁾ But my contribution to radical politics doesn't end there. Here, in brief, is a further contribution.

Bahro's speech in Hamburg gave rise to some remarkable reactions. While Antje Vollmer, who had supported the Bahro-Trampert motion, scolded Bahro, saying that he could not set himself up as a prophet or a messiah and that his intolerance put her in mind less of the Reformation than of the Inquisition, and while the other Hamburg fundis were dismissing him in private as a crank, "realo-reformers" (Norbert Kostede and Jo Müller, if I remember rightly) showed great sympathy for Bahro's thesis and believed with him that a consistently fundamentalist policy leaves only one way open - that of a popular rebellion.

The realo Norbert Kostede also defended Bahro at the Greens' delegate conference for North-Rhine-Westphalia and called upon the critics of realo-reform policies (he surely meant the Hamburg fundis) to explain why they reject Bahro's way and continue to involve themselves in parliamentary politics and even to offer 'toleration' on tougher conditions. It is plain what the realos want. They mean that if radical policies require a revolution in society, then there is only one way - that of popular revolt. If, however, a popular revolt is, and will remain, an illusion - as they maintain - then to be consistent one should drop the great aim of social transformation and do what is possible. Hence reformist policies.

These remarkable reactions make one thing clear; that only the reformists and the Bahro group (if in the meantime his comrades haven't deserted him) are thinking consistently. Those in between - the fundis like Trampert and Ebermann, and Dittfurth and Zieran - are having problems with their consistency. And Bahro has said as much.

The Fundis owe us an answer

The realo-reformists' criticism of the Hamburg and Frankfurt fundis is clear. If toleration is offered under such tough conditions (as the Hamburg fundis wish) that the SPD cannot accept them at all, then that is not a real offer, but merely a tactical ploy merely to shift the blame for the breakdown onto the SPD. If, as the Frankfurt City Council did in the past, one wanted no toleration at all and only went in for laborious parliamentary activity formulating hundreds of motions and official questions on greater and lesser issues, then one would not be changing anything. We would not be a step nearer the great goal of fundamental social change. Such criticism is just. The fundis

(1) This motion was defeated. It criticised the attempts of the reformists to enter into coalitions with the SPD and to give up the long-term goals of the party. It also stressed positively that there should be a greater emphasis on cooperation with the grassroots radical movement.

HOW? HOW? HOW?

IN WEST GERMANY green politics is in crisis. Die Grünen have suffered setbacks in the polls. The party is divided between the no-compromise, stick-to-basic-principles "fundamentalists" - the "fundis" - who believe the Greens will maintain their identity and purpose only by holding out on their utopian aims; and the "realist-reformers" - the "realos" - who take a pragmatic approach to policy and electoral and

owe us an answer to the question, "How?" How will they attain their utopia? What is the path, and what definite steps do they suggest here and now?

The realo-reformists seem to have given a clear answer to this question, namely alliance with the SDP and minor reforms. They have spoken and written a lot about this, and Hessen (2) is a very definite answer. However, the Bahro-Trampert motion only says:

"In the meantime the main focus of the Green Party must again be put increasingly upon association with extra-parliamentary forces. As it is the Greens themselves need a new impetus from the social opposition movements and the alternatives to the whole existing system."

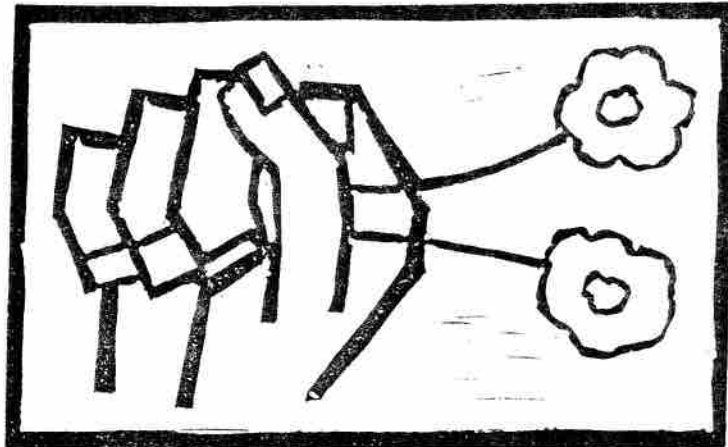
That is really not enough, especially since the social movements themselves say they are in danger of dying out and need new impetus themselves. They are unsure however in which direction. The federal conference of the anti-nuclear movement (November 1984) is proof of this. The current state of the peace and womens' movements is further evidence.

And Bahro has given a clear answer. He has actually named two ways; firstly a popular revolutionary movement like Gandhi's, and secondly the founding of communes (under the heading "the way in" he probably means that among other things). But the question "How?" remains unanswered by Bahro too. How can we bring about a Gandhi-style popular rebellion in this country (the German Federal Republic is not India under British rule!)? How can an extra-parliamentary movement achieve fundamental social change when, as we have recently seen, the biggest and most powerful extra-parliamentary movement in this country's history can't hold up a couple of missiles?

And communes? How many people here and now can form a commune or join an existing one? People who are dependent on an income and who have to feed a family cannot make this experiment. Even Bahro, who is an independent self-employed journalist, has still not managed to found his commune in Upper Bavaria. He still lives in a town. Moreover, even if a lot of people were willing and in a position to found new communes, where would they find all the land? To my knowledge the big farmers are not prepared to sell their land, rather they are buying up smaller farms. Nor can the smaller farmers sell their land since - unlike during the sixties - they see no prospects in industry. It is absolutely essential that some people in some communes should live out in advance for the rest the lifestyle of the future communal ecological society, but here and now that is possible for only a very few people. For a radical social change we need the masses. What could the masses do here and now (Bahro, remember, is talking about a popular revolutionary movement) towards attaining our alternative society and our radical aims?

(2) In Hessen the Greens were in informal alliance with the Social Democrats for about five months or so in 1984. This alliance collapsed on November 20 because the minority SPD government refused to support the Greens' call for the closure of two nuclear power plants in the state. Prior to this alliance the situation in Hessen had been rather unstable, and the Greens had "tolerated" certain measures which the SPD had wished to pass. It was reported just before the Hagen conference in June that the Social Democrats and Greens in Hessen were set to open negotiations which could lead to the first ever such formal ruling coalition in a West German state. Hence the tension between fundis and realos was made more obvious by these discussions.

These questions remain unanswered by Bahro. This is a great deficiency of the radical line, as we fundis admit. This disheartens many people who recognise the dangers and the futility of realo-reformism and have their sights on the fundamental aims, but are unsure how to attain these. Once in December 1983 when Bahro was speaking in Cologne - as usual he spoke very well and inspiringly - an anguished woman sprang up in the middle of his talk and cried, "But how? How? How?"



Different methods, different objectives

The realos have given a clear, consistent and convincing answer, we must allow them that. The problem is, however, that it is not our question they have answered but a different one. Their quite clearly and consistently defined path would lead us towards a goal quite different from the original aim of the Green Alternative and the aim of the fundis. In Hamburg the realos declared repeatedly that the end is the same, everyone is agreed on that, and that the differences are just about the method of reaching it. I find this dishonest. For two or three days earlier the same people had written:

"A policy of ecological reform recognises the necessity of overcoming the industrial and nuclear deterrent systems; but it also recognises that the sweeping and fundamental promises of revolution are, and will remain, illusions."

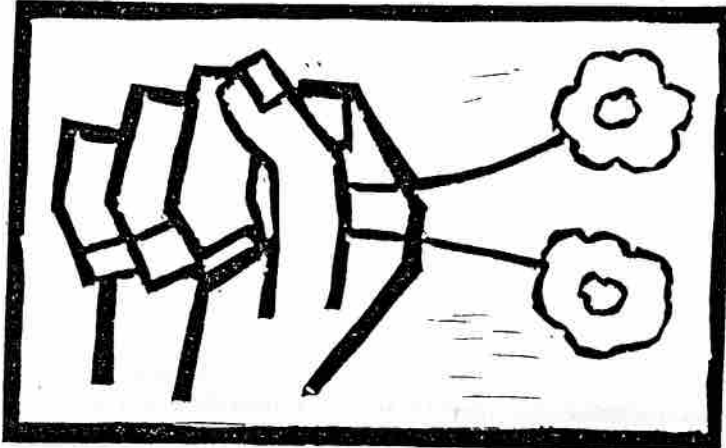
Recently, since 1982 when Bahro and Trampert were elected to the Federal Committee of die Grünen, it has been clear that by revolution neither of them means an assault upon government offices, but a fundamentally changed society of which the two men had, and perhaps still have, different pictures. If however a fundamentally different society is and will remain an illusion according to the realos, what meaning do they attach to "overcoming the industrial system"? In a typically 'real-political' fashion they have said nothing clear about this. They want reforms, that much is clear, but what does "taking over the industrial system" mean? Do they mean what Bahro means? (Why then should sweeping radical promises of revolution from Bahro and Trampert be and remain illusory? Why don't the realos make themselves clear?) No - they mean something quite different. Otherwise I can't see what all the argument is about.

One realo journalist has honestly said what they really do mean. He could do this because he doesn't need votes from the Greens to get elected. Klaus-Peter Klingelschmitt writes:

"These middle class folk are the electoral dregs of the Greens. These masses want neither to overthrow the system, nor to till the soil with wooden ploughs. These masses in their own homes and on their balconies (complete with geraniums) only want

to consume their barbecue in peace - without aircraft noise. These masses want their children to grow up without Pseudo-Krupp (the pollution-induced lung disease), they don't want the forests to die, and they want catalytic converters introduced. These masses want 'realpolitik' with no mention of utopia, which would have to be purchased with a serious decline in the quality of life."

If these are the aims of the realos, then they and the fundis should admit honestly that they have nothing to say to each other. Then the fundis should forget about the realos (they aren't little children, after all), or let them play about harmlessly in parliament and in the party. They themselves must reflect and try to find answers to the question "How?" - not vague abstract words, but really concrete suggestions about how to proceed here and now, tomorrow and the day after. So what are required are definite radical policies, something very different from the reform line of the realos or the supposedly more radical views of the eco-libertarians.



A Concrete radical policy on Gandhian lines

In Hamburg Bahro waxed lyrical about a popular rising on a Gandhi model. We fundis could in fact learn a great deal from Gandhi. At least he managed to stir the masses. But first some remarks on the extra-parliamentary social movements on which Bahro and Trampert now put their greatest emphasis and from which they hope for new impetus from the Greens. If I may risk a generalisation, all the German extra-parliamentary movements are far too fixated upon the state - with a very few exceptions. They call upon the state to do or not to do this or that. The peace movement calls upon the state not to station cruise missiles, the anti-nuclear movement demands that the building of nuclear power stations be abandoned, the ecology movement calls upon the state for desulphurisation, decontamination and a speed limit, the alternative movement demands money from the state for projects and enterprises, the womens' movement makes demands on the state for womens' centres and the deletion of Clause 218 (a clause of the penal code limiting conditions for legal abortions).

These and similar demands are right and just, and movements with such demands are also right and necessary.

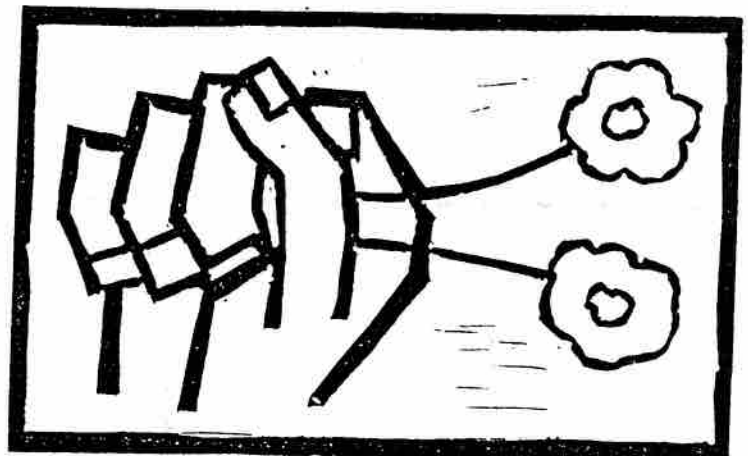
But what if the state does not oblige and, despite all protest, the CDU-CSU-SPD-FDP is determined to force through its policies. What happens next we've already seen: torpor and resignation in the party. Some brave spirits turn from demonstrations to resistance. But the police drive them away, and the missiles are stationed, and the nuclear power stations, chemical works, runways, underground railways and motorways go on being built. There is no lack of willing builders.

And the state copes with acts of minor sabotage from independent activists as easily as an elephant does fly bites. Despite their spirited resistance the opposition movements have little chance against the police and the courts. And then someone like Heinz Suhr can ask:

"Where are they, these wonderful forces? Where is it coming from, this forceful new impetus from the social resistance movements? If anyone's seen it, kindly let me know." (Heinz Suhr, press spokesman for die Grünen in the federal parliament, 5/12/84).

Gandhi's radical politics were quite different. He called upon the British rulers to leave India. The British did not do so. He appealed to the people for civil disobedience. The British killed and injured many people but still did not leave India. These then are the similarities; but the Gandhian popular revolutionary movement had certain features which did not involve demands upon the state (in this case foreign masters) but demands on oneself. There was non-cooperation, there was the struggle against the inhumane caste system, there was the Swadeshi (self-reliance) movement, there was his stress on moral and ethical values and the call for a simple, modest lifestyle. The success or failure of these things was entirely in the hands of the masses; in these areas their rulers could not hinder them. So Gandhi and his followers could achieve their main objectives (British withdrawal was their most conspicuous aim, but not their chief objective). But a mass movement had in fact come about.

There have been similar initiatives here, albeit half-hearted ones. "Giroblau" and "Panzerknacker" were attempts at non-cooperation. (Respectively, these were a campaign in the Netherlands to express opposition to nuclear power plants by paying electricity bills over the counter in small change or making deliberate errors in payment; and the less successful proposal in 1983 that members of the peace movement should take their money out of the banks to put pressure on the credit system.) There have also been faint and timorous calls for voluntary renunciation - for example, calls for limited consumption, for a boycott of foodstuffs imported from the Third World, and the sticker calling for "Speed limit 100 - voluntarily - for the sake of the forests". But not one of these appeals directed at the masses turned into a movement, not one was taken seriously.



A strategy of refusal

I think that is the extra-parliamentary social movements are to become major forces which can fundamentally change the system (as Bahro and Trampert believe), then these movements must in future have a new orientation. Demands must be made not principally on the state (though these must be made too) but

mainly on ourselves. It is not just the state which should act or abstain from action in response to our appeals - most of the time it doesn't anyway - but we ourselves who must do things or let them drop. That way we should have to start here and now, in our everyday lives - and it is something millions of people, the masses, can do.

If we want to learn from Gandhi then we should know for example that he called on the Indians to spin and weave the cloth for their own garments instead of using cloth imported from England. His disciples and hundreds of thousands of followers did just this. That is self-reliance, non-cooperation, the dignity of manual labour - all in everyday practical terms. There was a movement, but no one had to sell their house and leave their ordinary work to go into a commune. That was a real piece of radical politics. Bahro's picture of a "way in" and a "way out" is rather misleading. There is really no "out" either from this world or from this country (for most people anyway). Everything must be achieved within the given reality in terms of practical everyday life.

Not everything that was possible in India then is possible in West Germany today. Fundis who think realistically know this. But if nothing of the sort is possible, then the radical line has little hope. I believe that much of this sort is possible. If for example we want to get out of the motor car society (something the Greens want, according to their manifesto) then all we need do is get out and walk. Could all Green members and voters who drive a private car really say that they absolutely have to drive because there's no other possibility. If, through our refusal to drive, an anti-car movement came into being, that would be a real blow against growth, against capitalism, a step towards saving the forests, purifying the air, and a contribution to the economic use of scarce resources - all within an everyday context. If for example the Germans were to stop smoking and if that turned into a movement, then I see there a bigger and more promising extra-parliamentary movement. Imagine crises in the car and cigarette industries! That would be a crisis for capitalism and industrialism and there would be fewer senseless and poisonous products in the world. One could give many more similar examples. We also need a strategy for a far-reaching refusal to collaborate. Our high consumption in this country is collaboration with capital. Our consumption of pineapples, bananas and mangos, our excessive consumption of meat is collaboration with imperialism.

A strategy of independent co-operative action is also needed, which makes life happy and makes material life easier at a level of affluence below our present standard of living - housing cooperatives, babysitting groups, car collectives for essential journeys, and so on.

Naturally sceptics will say: yes, but... But they are not true sceptics. They are simply not prepared to give up their habitual lifestyle of luxury and extravagance for their utopia. Where, in that case, utopia will come from isn't their problem. Others will say I want to take all the joy out of life. There are lots of opportunities to find an excuse, but excuses aren't what's needed. Those willing to commit themselves for the sake of their convictions must be ready to pay the price. Gandhi led a simple life, and so he had credibility. His disciples and followers used hand-spun and hand-woven material for their clothing. Something comparable would be if Greens didn't smoke or drink, and used cars as rarely as possible.

Only one single "refusal" has taken on the character

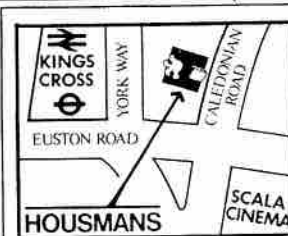
of a moment in Germany, and this is the refusal of military service. Critics might say that this is so because young people want to refuse strenuous forms of work, and so that is no real sacrifice. Whatever truth there is in this, the question remains whether our radical ecological utopia - where neither nature, nor persons, nor other peoples and lands, nor future generations will be exploited - can be attained without sacrifice. With reference to the peace movement Roland Vogt writes:

"Workers' leaders before 1914 very rarely expressed openly the feeling that exceptional efforts would have to be made ("sacrifice") in order to prevent war. Today most leaders in the German peace movement are most anxious to avoid putting forward or giving currency to any notion calling upon "the population" (i.e. "the voter") to make a sacrifice or to be ready to make one. Nevertheless these prudent peace campaigners move bravely from public discussion to public discussion with their battle cry of "'We shall' stop NATO re-arming"."

Similar things could be said in connection with the ecology movement and the Third World solidarity movement. Without a sacrifice (which is in reality no sacrifice but would soon prove to be an increase in the true quality of life) there would be no difference between the fundis and the Klingelschmitts. For Klingelschmitt is also unprepared to accept a decline in the "quality of life" by which he understands only luxury goods like barbecues and one's own home. For Klingelschmitt too and his associates, "city dwellers and adherents to the urban culture will defend that culture tooth and nail."

I know that it's all very difficult, requires time, and that there are lots of problems which I haven't discussed. OK! But is there at least the will to do it? Gandhi failed with an exploited, repressed, backward, illiterate, superstitious and caste-ridden people. Aren't conditions for a breakthrough in West Germany today, so far as political consciousness goes, a thousand times better? Or shall we fundis go on saying, as I've heard a few times, "We Greens are no better than other people," and so justify ourselves in continuing to muddle and compromise our way along as we are doing now?

** Rudolf Bahro has now left die Grünen. He did so after the conference in Hagen in June of this year. He was dissatisfied with the developments in Hessen and the pragmatic tendencies in the party. But the immediate cause for his resignation was the refusal of this federal party congress to pass a resolution demanding total prohibition of animal experiments without exceptions. He has apparently not yet stated his future plans, but he has emphasised that he will not become apolitical.



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letters

More on Findhorn

Dear GL,

Tima from Findhorn has responded to my article on New Age spirituality. The tone of her letter and what she says are very much what I expected and I think clearly illustrate the difficulties confronting people working in the New Age scene to counteract oppression. In essence, I felt Tima's letter expressed her very different and positive experiences at Findhorn, but also made it subtly but indelibly clear that she did not feel it was on for me to share my negative ones in the way I chose to.

Firstly, I thought it was clear from my account that I was writing of my experience in 1980-82. I did point out that things may have changed since I lived there. What I was seeking to do in my article was to explain and question why I am not still living at Findhorn, even though I am dedicated to a spiritually evolving way of life. Tima writes: "I feel it is crucial that we realise that we simply don't have any more time to give energy to 'us-and-them-ism', pointing of fingers, and focussing on our differences" etc. I detected a familiar superior flavour from this and much of what she writes, which leaves much of what I wrote relegated to the arena of muck-raking at the worst, or sheer negativity for its own sake at the best. I'm sure we would all agree in trying to move beyond "them-and-us-ism"; but the main point of my article was that the "us" at Findhorn in 1982 did not include women like me. I was asked to leave if I wanted to live on my own with my two children. Thus the tantalising cauldron of soup that Tima talks of creating misses my own unique and valuable contribution and that of many women like me.

I agree with Tima that now is the time for healing wounds. However, for me personally as a woman, this can best be done in an environment that does not necessitate the survival struggle I faced as a mother at Findhorn and in an atmosphere that is not pervaded by the use of language that subsumes "us" women in "them".

Also, I was not suggesting that the situation at Findhorn was as gross as a male plot to destroy women. It's a much more subtle question of what type of women's consciousness was valued there. However, there were aspects of the political and spiritual situation which I felt were very destructive to women. These I covered briefly in my article. Tima's response did not deal with these very real issues but kept

discussion on a "higher level".

However, I would not want any woman to feel answerable for a situation that existed three years ago and of which she was not part. It seems to me, surely, to be up to New Age groups as a whole to clarify where exactly they stand on issues round oppression and (e.g.) the arms race.

Three years have passed since I left Findhorn and it is perfectly possible that much has changed since that time on the issues I raised. I can only suggest that those interested in this debate and in bringing together the political and spiritual aspects of change visit Findhorn and experience things for themselves.

Daphne Francis
53 Victoria Street
Kirkpatrick Durham
Castle Douglas, Kircudbrightshire.

Dear GL,

I must write to comment on Daphne Francis' article about Findhorn, though I am very late in doing so.

I have visited Findhorn on three occasions as a guest, keep in touch with their magazine, and I am at present studying the works of Alice Bailey. This gives me some knowledge of what she is talking about. I have sympathy with her experience and although I am not a feminist I can see her problem.

I would suggest that Findhorn, although it has high ideals, is only as good as the people who are there at the time. As they choose others of like mind, they are not likely to transform their ideals into a more feminist outlook.

Patriarchism has held sway for a very long time. It is a good thing that it is now being challenged, but it is unrealistic to expect the change which only started in the 19th century to occur quickly and completely, even within New Age groups. It is only a balance of male/female qualities that is needed - the Yin/Yang ideal.

Daphne had a bad experience at Findhorn. So did I, but overall I enjoyed my visits. Findhorn is not an easy place if you get deeply involved into it. It is a place to grow spiritually and that can be painful. Daphne may have benefited but as yet not recognise the fact because of the painful memories.

She said that Findhorn attracts only white middle class people. That is true on the whole, but given its very special intellectual angle

it is not surprising that it is not attractive to the working class or non-mental types.

I think she exaggerated the use of male symbolism. Surely the moon is a female symbol; and if you have the sun, there is the balance.

Findhorn is not a protest group, a pressure group or a political party. As a member of the Ecology Party I have come to understand why people shy away from politics. Findhorn's task is to work on the positive. Others do the work of protesting.

She said that Alice Bailey wrote "obscure" books. Yes, they are necessarily obscure. In order to gain spiritual understanding there has to be effort to search for truth. The task of "knowing oneself" truly is not easy. "The path" is on the razor edge. This "path" can be explained in easy terms but the depth cannot be grasped until, by constant effort, the physical, emotional and mental bodies become unified.

She misunderstands the position of the Aryan race. According to Alice Bailey each race in turn becomes a leading race, to be succeeded by another, adding their different qualities to the whole. There is no superiority in its glamoured sense. Occult (hidden) forces can be used for good or evil. The Nazis chose the latter; Alice Bailey chooses "White Magic" in its best sense.

It is difficult for a community to live up to the high expectations of its founders. Perhaps there is a lack of sensitivity on the role of women and children which they should work on.

I hope this letter helps by putting a different view on the Findhorn Community.

Mrs V Shepherd
8 Birklands Terrace Shipley, W Yorks.

Dear GL,

I was glad to see Tima Priess' letter from the Findhorn Foundation in response to Daphne Francis' article. I would like to see more of the energy that Findhorn taps being used in Britain, and T.P.'s letter might open up a channel to Green Line and its readers.

However, I think it is a pity that she tried to invalidate D.F.'s personal account of her experience at Findhorn without giving us the information on which she bases her opinion. I believe that the community at Findhorn does have some valuable experiences to share - and T.P., if she is a young, single, childless, white, heterosexual woman, will be well placed to have

letters

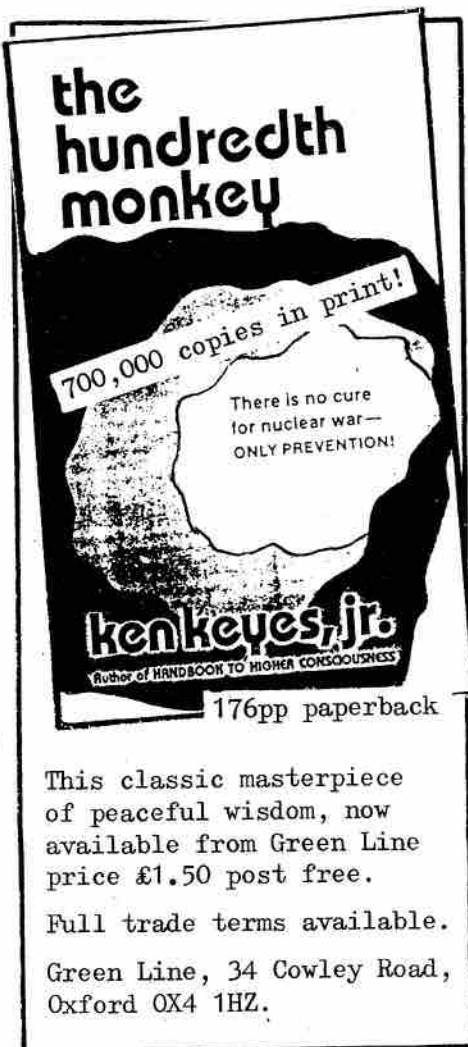
the most creative and energising of these experiences. I would like to encourage her to share them with us.

I think it would also be a relevant response to D.F.'s article if she could persuade other categories of people at Findhorn to tell us of their experiences. I would like to know what the men at Findhorn are doing to help mothers of young children take a full and active part in the life of the community; and I would also like to ask some of these mothers (perhaps a single parent mother if there is one) to tell us of their experiences at Findhorn.

If all of this were to happen we would have a broader view of the Findhorn Foundation, and more information to add to that which D.F. has given us. Then perhaps we could decide whether Findhorn has changed since D.F.'s time.

Malcolm Cockcroft
Myrtle Cottage, Slogarie Estate
Laurieston, Castle Douglas
Kirkcubrightshire DG7 2NL

** GL is certainly widely read at Findhorn, and we look forward to receiving more letters from readers there. - Ed.



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Tea: put local needs first

Dear GL,

Chris Bulzacki ("Action on Tea", GL35) states correctly that the tea trade provides foreign exchange. But this can only be put to useful ends if the profit from tea is in the hands of a benevolent government or landowner. Usually tea plantations are owned by multinationals or tyrannical governments, and the workers are paid in local currency.

He says that "the tea trade does provide many people with valuable employment in what might otherwise be a hopeless situation." Surely the solution to this is not an increase in tea trade but rather a change of land ownership, whereby workers would possess their own land and control their destinies by deciding which crops to grow.

Chris rightly points out that tea revenues have fallen dramatically in real terms in recent years. Thus anyone who grows tea is victim to the vagaries of the international economic system and may find that their cash crops cannot be sold at a profit because of foreign competition. Rice that is grown but cannot be profitably sold can at least be eaten by the grower.

The author suggests that by growing tea, countries can benefit by the "principle of comparative advantage". Benefit, yes - but at whose expense? If a country which exports cash crops and imports food crops can pay more for a food crop than the workers in the food crop producing country, then the workers in the latter will suffer and may starve. Famine-struck Ethiopia still exports £300m of agricultural produce, much of it to America.

"High technology" is used more and more in cash-crop production. Much work is done by machines and labour becomes redundant. Machinery and fertilisers must be bought with foreign currency - yet as has been said, cash crop revenues have plummeted in real terms. Higher yields are needed to create the same amount of profit. Thus countries must borrow the money to purchase the tractors to create the higher yield to maintain the profit levels. A tea surplus is created, prices fall, and debts cannot be paid. Cash crop exporters are led into a vicious circle of dependency on Western countries.

The need to maximise yields in the short term means that land is pushed to its limits causing long-term soil erosion and desertification. In an attempt to find more cultivatable land forests are cut down (as in Sri Lanka). Buying "Campaign"

and "WDM" tea and coffee is better than tea from Unilever, Nestle and the like, but is merely a drop in the ocean and must be recognised as such.

A more positive way forward would be for each community to be self-reliant and self-dependent for food production. I believe Chris Bulzacki is wrong on his own terms; also, the result of his policy goes against the green ethos, as I understand it, by placing economic considerations above the needs and wishes of individual human beings and ecological considerations.

Mike Lank
189 Claremont Road
Manchester M14



No one way

Dear GL,

If Ian Smith (Letters, GL 35) finds the red/green debate so wasteful, then I'm puzzled that he felt a need to add his own hot air. But he has fallen into the trap of believing that there is a "right" way of seeing things and appears to have become convinced of the invincibility of his own thought.

I wish the world were that transparent, that in a few paragraphs we could elucidate "reality" and thus see clearly the steps we must take.

"Working class" and "middle class" are concepts that we all in differing ways apply to our experience of life. Whereas apathy, injustice and complacency can be human weaknesses within any social or cultural system class-ridden or not.

I also think we should be careful to distinguish between the effects of systems imposed from without, and the development - or lack of it - of our own "inner" systems. Leading on from that I would like to ask Ian if he thinks "class division and multi-deprivation" is symptom or cause, if this is what we have to get rid of first to take us to our ecological society.

Apart from that, let the debate continue; and hopefully we can learn from each other's experience, knowledge, efforts and ways of thinking. And, I hope, avoid the setting up of any green dogma "intertwined" with red or not.

Kay Wedgbury
199 Slad Road, Stroud GL5 1RJ



Ecology and fascism

Dear GL,

Henry Cox is right that there is no meaning to the phrase "green fascism". However, this is a term which he himself has coined. I have never seen it in use anywhere else before.

It seems to me that he is confusing the terms "ecology" and "green". The two are not the same: they are not synonymous. The term "eco-fascism" is not the "destruction of the meaning of words" but a logical coherent description of a possible state of society in which ecological policies are dictated by a centralised authoritarian government. A possible state whose potential existence he himself accepts. Such a state would of course be anathema to any self-respecting "green".

Henry overlooks the fact that ecological policies are being adopted right now by such "fascist" organisations as the National Front. No, the NF is not adopting a "green" philosophy, it is adding an ecological outlook to its "fascist" policies - i.e. it is developing an "eco-fascist" world view.

Henry is right to criticise the fact that most people seem to have an over-simplified view of politics. Yes, the left-right axis is too simplistic, however his own political outlook seems a bit simplistic too. Does he really believe that the left-right split can be reduced to a statement of preference between public (state) or private firms? And what does he mean by saying that the usual proposal in England (and presumably in Scotland and Wales too) is liberty without sustainability? Which political party or parties does he think offer us such a path. Quite frankly, at the moment none of the major political parties even seem to offer any great degree of real liberty. The policies of the Ecology Parties (England, Scotland and Wales) however offer both.

Andrew Ferguson
1 Vinicombe Street (Top/Left)
Hillhead, Glasgow G12 8BH

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Change of name, change of heart?

Jon Carpenter writes:

ON SEPTEMBER 21 in Dover the annual conference of the Ecology Party decided to change the party's name. The Green Party was born with 244 members voting in favour, 93 against, and 11 abstaining. The party now looks forward to a 're-launch' and membership drive in the spring; though if the image has changed as a result of the vote, Jean Lambert (a retiring co-chair of Party Council) stressed to members in her closing speech that the basic philosophy remains just the same.

Members clearly felt the pressure was on to change, but many regretted giving up a name they had been campaigning to make better known. But with all the other parties claiming to be green, most felt this was the last chance the party had to change its name and define what green really means.

What repercussions the change will have in the 'green movement' is to be seen. Some people have certainly seen the 'green' label as a welcome refuge from conventional party labels - and all that goes with conventional party politics. Other people will welcome anything which will intensify the meaning of the word 'green' in a political sense; and if the party is effective in its new publicity, the word 'green' should surely become an inescapable element of the political scene.

Of greater interest perhaps is the question whether the Green Party will really turn out to be a new party or not. Technically the party's policy manifesto and its 'philosophical basis' remain unchanged for the next 12 months at least. But the new name brings a new image - and perhaps a new self-image too. 'Ecology' was always defined in terms of scientific knowledge: ecological policies were seen as a scientific extrapolation from observed phenomena. Members will now try to explain the party's basis in terms of 'green' - and surely just as 'ecology' was a word of the 70s and the doomsday prognosis (and always perilously close to 'mere' environmentalism), so 'green' is a word for the 80s with their distrust of scientific rationale (all the '-logies' have let us

down) and a preference for intuition, personal values and a return to more ancient forms of knowledge. Green politics is only partly dependent on ecological insight for its justification, and problems are as often perceived to spring from blocks to consciousness and understanding within ourselves as from 'objective' and external forces.

Hitherto it has been an open question whether the Ecology Party was a green party. Three years ago it affirmed that it was; now it has defined itself as such. Perhaps the party will bring new meaning to the word the green: such must surely be its purpose. Perhaps too the word green will bring new meaning to the party.

** The Green Party's next conference (devoted primarily to election strategy) is expected to be held in Malvern in early February.

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TURNING POINT. Fritjof Capra. Brings together green politics and new age thinking. £3.50

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34 Cowley Road Oxford
(0865)245301

Japan Green Party

Rick Davis writes:

THE JAPAN GREEN PARTY was formed on March 13 1983 in Kobe, Japan. Yamazaki Keiji, now a member of the Kochi Green Party and chairman of the Japan National Federation of Environmental Organisations (made up of about 150 organisations, formed in 1970), and Koga Yoshio, now standing representative of the Japan Green Party, called for the formation of the Japan Green Party in June 1982, organising the Committee for the Formation of the Japan Green Party, which led to the realisation of the idea. Nearly 500 persons participated.

The Party now has four representatives in city councils in the Kansai (Western Honshu) region. In the last national election they ran one candidate from Aichi Prefecture, but he was defeated.

A prime objective of the Party is to change the lives of its members before anything else; for without this transformation, they believe, there can be no other lasting or meaningful change in society. They publish a monthly newsletter called Midori no Wa ("The Green Circle"). All the Party members participate in some form of activism - the practice and promotion of organic agriculture, preservation of mountains and forests, working with consumer organisations, anti-war, anti-nuclear, peace, etc.

There are no formal ties between the Japan Green Party office and outlying organisations (there are a number of local green parties throughout the country), and no relationships as between headquarters and branches. All groups act of their own accord, no orders are issued, and contacts between groups and individuals are maintained in accordance with necessity. The Japan Green Party has about 200 officially registered members, but because of the loose relationship with local green parties, no one knows exactly how many Greens there are in all.

(From Green Letter, Berkeley, USA)

Irish green seat

MARCUS COUNIHAN of Kery Greens gained a seat on Killarney County Council in the recent local elections.

Green Swedes

Erika Bjerstrom writes:

EVER SINCE its founding in 1981 the Swedish Green Party - Miljopartiet - has been accused of being "nature-romantic" and "single-issue" and unable or unwilling to deal with the "hard economic issues." But no more. At a special conference earlier this year the party finally adopted an economic programme.

It was a struggle. A faction called the "Ecological Economists" (similar in some ways to the bioregionalists) wanted to lay the groundwork for a moneyless society based upon a barter system and - at most - local currencies. In the end a compromise was struck that generally favoured the more pragmatic approach of the party's steering committee.

"Many may not feel that we have come very far with our economic programme," says Per Gahrton, one of the two elected spokespersons for Miljopartiet. "But we have come very far compared to the economic establishment that still speaks in outdated terms of GNP, economic growth and full-time wage employment for everybody. We speak of locally-based economies and we are committed to four solidarities: with future generations, with the Third World, with nature, and with social justice in Sweden."

Even without an economic programme, in the elections of 1982 Miljopartiet amazed the political establishment by gaining seats in 96 of the 284 local municipalities. This autumn the party will be participating in the national elections. If it gains seats in parliament (it only needs 4% of the vote to do so) it has already promised not to align itself with the Social Democratic coalition. Instead, it will seek cooperation with the Social Democrats or the Conservative-Liberal coalition on single issues.

Lead alternative

AN ENGINEERING firm in Bury St Edmunds has recently brought out a highly satisfactory alternative to lead weights for anglers. Fisherman are a notoriously conservative lot and angling shops in Bury were no exception when I approached them with the product. However it does now have the support of our local angling correspondent for the Bury Free Press who has tested it with a busload of anglers and declared it a "small miracle". Available from me, Chris Southall, at £1 per packet incl p&p. (Address: 27 The Green, Barrow, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP29 5AA.)

Friends of the Earth

+ have produced 2 foot square green and white signs saying "No straw-burning here - Thank you farmer" to be put up on roads alongside farms where farmers have stopped this evil practice. FoE hope more farmers will use straw for fuel briquettes or treat it for feed.

+ is pressing the government to protect Duich Moss, Islay, an internationally important wetland under threat from the peat requirements of the local distillery. David Bellamy and Jonathon Porritt were sent packing from the island after they tried to hold a meeting there: residents disagreed with the FoE position, but had been well 'briefed' by the distillery.

+ are organising to oppose CEBG plans to deliver more coal to power stations by road in future. Already just 5 counties are claiming a total of £1.2m compensation from the CEBG for road damage during the miners' strike.

+ are fighting BR's decision to ban all free carriage of cycles on 125s.

+ have launched the first national survey of acid rain dieback on native British trees. Free action packs illustrate the effect of dieback on yew and beech trees, the two species believed to be the first to suffer. The report should be published this month.

+ is organising an International Rainforest Rally (Commonwealth Institute Galleries, Friday October 18th at 7 p.m. - Kensington High Street). Many speakers, including from Brazil, Kenya, and the Chipko Movement in India. Entry £2.50/£2.

+ held Britain's first major protest rally against acid rain on Sept 28 at Didcot power station, Oxon., where the stack emits 62,000 tonnes of sulphur a year.

+ have distributed 35,000 postcards throughout Europe for people to send to tourist boards and politicians in this country. They read "We love your country - but not your pollution" and are part of a tourist boycott of Britain by Europeans.

Rate protest

EAST ANGLIAN Ecology Parties have called on local ratepayers to withhold their water rates until Anglian Water agree to meet EEC standards for nitrates which became legally binding on July 15. (See GL report on Nitrate Pollution, 10p plus s&c from GL.)

Pacific Womens' Conference

A CONFERENCE of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific women's network will be held in Bristol on November 2/3 - to share information and ideas for action and to have fun, and to connect struggles here with the Pacific movement and to build on the momentum created by the recent visits of Pacific women. £1 unwaged and suggested £5 waged. Details: sae to Sue Upton, 80 Sevier Street, St Werburghs, Bristol; or phone Jean on Bristol (0272) 621808. Women only.

French boycott

MORUROA ATOLL is about to be the site of further French nuclear tests. The anarchist group London Greenpeace is urging people to boycott French goods and to write to the French government saying why. The group is also calling for a national day of protest on October 16 against McDonalds and other burger chains by those who "oppose junk food, destruction of rain forests, and the murder of animals. Previous successful actions have included the "murder" of a pantomime cow inside a busy McDonalds in Bournemouth.

Save free festivals

Mike Deal writes:

THE 1976 Melchett committee on free festivals is a model of what is urgently needed, and we are now forming a committee which will either report to any official committee appointed or issue its own report in the absence of government action. If you would like to participate or want information, please write to us. We fear that in the absence of a Melchett committee 'hippie' free festivals will be abolished. Our address: Stone Committee on Free Festivals, 45 Westwood Hill, London SE26 6NS.

Green esperantists

Christopher Fettes writes:

AT THIS summer's Esperanto Congress in Augsburg, attended by people from more than 50 countries, over 50 actual and potential greens attended a three-hour seminar on ecology. The international goodwill reminded one of that enjoyable congress of European Greens in Dover, with the difference that in Augsburg everybody could understand one another...

Women-journeying

WOMEN-JOURNEYING... is the title of an exhibition by Jill Smith and Lynne Wood at the Showroom Gallery, 44 Bonner Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 from October 21-31. Jill will be exhibiting work (drawings, writings, photographs and performance/installation) arising from her recently completed year-long journey round England and Wales. On this she and fellow journeyers received much help from contacts made through GL. Lynne will be exhibiting powerful drawings from time spent at Ayers Rock in Australia and sacred British sites, and also presenting performances.

Active neutrality

ACTIVE NEUTRALITY Now - Europe (ANNE) is the title of a new network set up in July by Peter Cadogan. It builds on demands already expressed in New Zealand, central America, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Literature from him (sae please) at 1 Hampstead Hill Gardens, London NW3.

Warmer dustbins

EACH YEAR in the UK we dump 30 million tonnes of rubbish in holes in the ground. Recycled as fuel, this would have the energy equivalent of 12 million tonnes of coal - enough heat and power for 2½ million homes. Warmer is a campaign to get rubbish turned into fuel: bulletin from Warmer Campaign, Freepost, 83 Mount Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells TN4 8PR.

Green Liberals

THE LIBERAL Ecology Group has trebled its membership over the last year, and about 30 constituency associations are now affiliated. A new edition of the LEG manifesto has been published and is available price 70p from Doreen Elton, 177 Heene Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 3BG.

Self reliance

TURNING POINT'S autumn meeting, entitled "New Directions for Health and Work: Self-Reliance in the Community", will discuss the shift in emphasis now taking place away from dependency - on the medical professions for health and on outside employers for work - towards personal and community self-reliance. £4 (£2 unwaged). Saturday Nov. 30. Details/tickets from Turning Point, The Old Bakehouse, Cholsey, Wallingford, Oxon. OX10 9NU (0491-652346).

Vegan voices

THE VEGAN Society has undergone some internal upheavals. Kathleen Jannaway is no longer anything to do with the society, and its journal has a 'new look'. The society looks set for a period of vigorous campaigning particularly around animal rights.

Meanwhile Kathleen Jannaway is behind a new "Movement for Compassionate Living", working "for the ending of all exploitation: by humans of each other in families, societies and the world, and by humans of animals."

She writes: "The new movement will be organised in conformity with the principle that every group to which we belong should be a microcosm of the new world which we work to create. It will have no repressive rules, no hierarchy, no voting. Membership will be open to all. It will function with the minimum of expenditure of resources compatible with efficient communication. It will bring together those who seek to promote the compassionate way of life and who aspire to nonviolence in deed and word." Meetings, educational projects and a quarterly magazine are planned.

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Living peace at Emerson

Annie Davy writes:

EMERSON COLLEGE again provided a beautiful welcoming and supportive space with its buildings, land and people for a meeting of about 100 women, men and children from very diverse backgrounds and nationalities and with very different reasons for coming.

The 'Living Peace' week-long conference at the college (an adult education centre based on the work of Rudolf Steiner) remains in my memory as an intense and rich tapestry of experience. So many threads were woven in, so many meetings and themes ran through the week, that it is difficult to elicit even some of those which were significant.

Morning workshops ran for 5 days and included such themes as Inner Peace, Living with Ourselves, Masculine/Feminine, Building Co-operative Communities, Living with the Earth, and Working for Peace in a Violent World. In the afternoons there were craft workshops, working on the land, or swimming in a shaded water-lily-strewn pool.

Some of the participants had had quite a lot of involvement in Steiner's Anthroposophy, others were more involved in the peace/green movements, while others still wanted to find out more about either or both. Some were obviously more esoterically inclined, others more politically minded. For me this was a fundamental theme of the week: a dialogue between those somewhat cut off from the outside world in their inner contemplations and strivings, and those tired out peace campaigners in need of space and time to reevaluate their work and recharge their inner resources. A useful and important dialogue which was by no means always tension-free.

During the so-called 'market place' periods participants had the opportunity of sharing some of their

work and interests with others: women from Greenham, reflections on the last END conference, what really happened at Stonehenge, running an alternative restaurant, a drug addiction centre, a sheep farm, and so on. There were three evening lectures - Brig Oubridge and Jonathon Porritt both illustrating again the tension between living 'at peace' and working for peace in a none too peaceful world, while Carol Fraser gave a more reflective and inward-looking talk. There were also two much-needed social evenings.

At the time, the fullness of the programme (at times too full) and the intensity and often high emotion of the event, did not leave much time for contemplation and evaluation of the conference. However, looking back now at the week I feel its success is measured by the tremendous amount of support and insight I (and others I have spoken to) have gained, and will no doubt go on gaining from it in retrospect.

In itself a good attempt at 'living peace', the conference moved on from last year's theme 'what makes for peace'. Living peace is not just the goal, the end in itself, it is the means - a continuously changing and growing process, and for this reason I hope there will be another Emerson peace week next year - one which I for one certainly intend to be at.

Women irradiated

SOME FORM of low-level radiation coming out of USAF Greenham Common is causing a range of symptoms among women camping at the base. Women at the Green Gate have been particularly affected. Since most of the research into the effects of low-level radiation has been suppressed or carried out by the military, the women are having difficulty establishing what is making them ill, or whether it is deliberate or not. If you may be able to help with 'expert' information, write to: Green Gate, Women's Peace Camp, USAF Greenham Common, Newbury, Berks.

Acton W.3

IAN FREER, of 6 Kingsbridge Avenue, Acton, London W3 9AJ, would like to meet local GL readers.

Green CND

GREEN CND's AGM was held on August 17. It was decided to hold a Green Day at Molesworth on Saturday 23rd November (info: Brig Oubridge, Molesworth Peace Camp, Clopton, nr Kettering, Northants). And the Sizewell Action Group is being re-formed: contact Marcus on 0206 251 264. Green CND now has a new secretary: Fiona Meehan, 6 Medora Road, London SW2 - phone 01-671 6823.

New University

THERE WILL be a meeting for people interested in the New University project on Sunday October 13 at 11 a.m. at the University of London Catholic Chaplaincy, 11 Gower Street, London WC1. Newcomers welcome. Contact: Sally Willington, 278 Battersea Park Road, London SW11 (01-223 8574).

Radical tapes

THE MONKEY AND the Dragon is the distribution agency for taped radio programmes produced in the US by The Great Atlantic Radio Conspiracy. The chief themes of the 50-odd programmes available on tape are feminism, anarchism, health, and anti-nuclear issues. Catalogue from Monkey and the Dragon, Tweed Street, High Bentham, Lancaster LA2 7HW.

Concerned Christians

PEOPLE, TECHNOLOGY and the Environment is the title of a weekend seminar for concerned Christians to be held on October 18-20 at The Wycliffe Centre, Horsleys Green, High Wycombe by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity in association with the Christian Ecology Group. Cost £29.50. Info: The Dean, The London Institute, St Peter's Church, Vere Street, London W1M 9HP (01-629 3615).

Machynlleth courses

A BROCHURE listing residential courses at the Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, to be held in the 1985/6 season is now available for a sae from Lesley Bradnam at the Centre in Powys, Wales.

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