

GREEN *Line*

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50P



GREEN LINE

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THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE OF GREEN POLITICS AND LIFESTYLE

GREEN LINE is published ten times a year, and is produced by a collective based in Oxford.

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The next issue is due out on June 1: we need all news, etc by May 11 (limited 'stop press' space sometimes available!). When sending articles, please note that in general all articles are read and discussed at an editorial collective meeting on the first Wednesday of each month.

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We'd like to hear from people in or near Oxford who can help with editorial and production work; who can draw; or with word-processing experience (or typing ability and a willingness to learn!). Give us a ring and come to our next editorial meeting.

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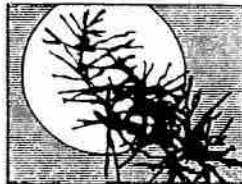
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The ones we love to hate

JULIETTE MAJOT writes:

"TOP GREENS GO OVER TO ENEMY CAMP" screamed the Observer headline in space usually allocated to the latest explanation of further delays at Torness and Heysham. But this time Geoffrey Lean, longstanding, reliable and justifiably respected environmental correspondent, had something new and disturbing to report; Graham Searle, founder of Friends of the Earth UK, and George Pritchard, charismatic Greenpeace anti-nuclear campaigner, were according to Lean "Joining the industries that their pressure groups most love to hate."

Searle, a multi-talented geologist - cum - environmentalist who has the distinction of being the only observer to attend every day of the 340 day Sizewell B Public Inquiry, announced that he had accepted a £9,700 annual retainer for consultancy services to Rechem - a controversial British company that incinerates toxic wastes, including PCBs.

Pritchard, best known inside the environmental movement as the man most closely linked with the National Union of Seamen (the union that refused to transport radioactive waste to an Atlantic Ocean dump site in 1983) surprised few when he announced his resignation from the internally volatile Greenpeace. But it was a surprise to hear that he has formed an official alliance with Alex Copson, wonder boy of the believers in a techno-fix for the disposal of radioactive waste. Copson is polishing up his design for a system to emplace radioactive waste in the deep sea bed; and assuming Pritchard will be doing what he is best at, it will be he who will be convincing the public and Parliament that this is a good idea. Graham Searle will help too.

It's bad news for everyone who has worked with Searle and Pritchard. And it's daunting for Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth who are the recipients of the misplaced aggression of those who are angry about it all. But for the joint contribution made to the environmental movement by Searle and Pritchard, it might be easy to turn on the neon flashing lights crying SELL OUT. But FoE's director Jonathon Porritt was clever to keep his comments to a minimum, cautioning against watchdogs becoming lapdogs. And Greenpeace too has been wise to restrict comments to those contained in a short letter to the editors of the London dailies from its director, Alan Thornton. If they haven't been already, both FoE and Greenpeace will be approached by Searle, Copson and Pritchard, and they will respond having been prepared. The whole scenario requires second thoughts, and a good deal of restraint to stop the knee from jerking. Beyond endless academic discussion of the fundamental question of the best way to effect change in industries presenting major threats to the environment, the specific question of what exactly Searle and Pritchard are aiming for deserves attention.

DEEP SEA BED EMPLACEMENT

Deep sea bed emplacement of radioactive wastes is an idea that has been around for nearly a decade. It surfaced at a bad time for its proponents. In the early 1980s, as the international community established a worldwide moratorium on sea dumping of radioactive wastes, deep sea bed emplacement was an easy target to take down. In 1983 the London Dumping Convention (LDC - the international body responsible for protecting the marine environment from waste dumping from ships) set up a special working committee to establish the legal nature of deep sea bed emplacement. The distinction between considering it 'dumping' or not is an

important one, since proclaiming it to be the former would automatically place the intermediate and high level wastes planned for emplacement in a category of waste dumping prohibited under Annex 1 of the Convention.

To date the legal status of emplacement is still undecided. The moratorium has not just been extended but actually strengthened, and the social and political pressures applying to waste dumping in international waters has never been more pronounced. Deep sea bed emplacement will certainly be on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the LDC. But the complexities of the criteria whereby to reconsider the existing ban have proved so cumbersome that the next meeting will not be held until late 1988.

George Pritchard knows all of that. He worked with the Greenpeace International and FoE International observer delegations to the LDC, and certainly some of his work had a bearing on the strength of the anti-dumping resolutions now in force. He knows too that the decisions of the LDC were cited by the National Union of Seamen and recognised by the TUC as legitimate grounds for refusing UK government orders to ignore the ban and proceed with dumping in 1983.

Graham Searle states that his retainer pays him to remind Rechem to provide its critics with any and all information that they request. He knows that in two months' time the government's Hazardous Waste Inspectorate will release its 1987 report on Hazardous Waste Management, and that Rechem would do well to use the findings to its own best advantage. Though too late to actually influence the

report itself, Mr Searle's new official standing at Rechem can provide them with desperately needed advice on PR following the report. More importantly, he can help get Rechem to come out on top in a shake-out of the waste industry. There is little doubt Searle believes he is doing the best he can to clean up Rechem. But in the great tradition of campaigners, what he will actually do is decidedly unclear to anyone other than himself.

According to Searle, he is receiving no retainer for work undertaken with Pritchard and Copson on the sea bed emplacement scheme. He states that he is doing this because he believes in it. Pritchard's motivation is even less convincing. While it is understandable that environmental campaigners tire of the negative aspects of their campaigns, he has always outwardly supported review of ALL storage options and, only after a due consideration is given to each, taking a decision on the best. His recent claims that he has "changed his mind" and chosen the deep sea bed option because it won't put waste in anyone's backyard suggest a naivety that he has never previously displayed. Support for on-land, above ground, monitorable, retrievable storage systems for existing waste has been an important component in the Greenpeace campaign to face up to what the nuclear industry has already created, and to stop it before it creates more.

On the surface, Searle and Pritchard have both taken on roles that are confusing, and potentially damaging. Each is having to react to the wrath of people they have trusted, and who have trusted them. But the industries which have pronounced them as "enlightened" must also be wondering. Just what are Pritchard and Searle and those unidentified people working with them going to do? Second thoughts abound.

More of this in a future issue...



Andy Kaye

Germans bring challenge to UK party

JON CARPENTER reports:

THE GUEST speakers at the Green Party's spring conference in Newcastle in March were three members of Die Grunen. They were on an information-gathering trip to the UK on behalf of the German party. Brigitte Berthold, whose talk we hope to print in a future issue of GL, is a member of the Bundesvorstand, Die Grunen's highest decision-making body. Frieda O Wolff and Jakob von Uexkull are "alternate members" of the European parliament, which means that they hope to rotate into the parliament as other MEPs stand down after their agreed term (though whether they will or not seems to be another matter!).

Jakob von Uexkull is intriguingly memorable! He was born in Sweden, grew up in Germany, and his Estonian name means "One village". An Oxford graduate, he is a philatelist, a journalist and an translator. He sold his stamp collection and set up the Right Livelihood Award, and it was in recognition of this that Die Grunen invited him to go on their list for the European parliament (he was not an active member at that time). I spoke to him about the reasons for the visits he and his companions were making, and the impressions they gained while in the UK.

The group had held meetings with SERA, the Socialist Society, Tony Benn, the Welsh Nationalist Party, the NUM, the Scottish Nationalist Party, Robin Blackburn, representatives of the women's movement, and others. The purpose of the visit was information gathering: the party is very keen on international solidarity, and the three were in Britain to make links with groups and individuals who are campaigning for women's rights, peace, the abandonment of nuclear power, and in defence of the Third World.

Jakob compares his conversations with the radical left in Britain today with experiences of a few years ago, and detects "a much greater disillusionment with conventional British politics, specifically with the Labour Party. They see it as very difficult to find a political alternative to the Labour Party, but they also realise that as presently constituted it's not going to help them. They seem increasingly to welcome green politics: you won't always find them saying that, but their interest in the Green Party and in ourselves certainly shows that."

Does Jakob see the Green Party playing an active role in the greening of British politics, or will that job be done in the end by other parties? His message of comfort: don't underestimate the role you play even when you're not in power! The existing parties are very concerned at the role the Green Party can play in marginal seats.

However, the brunt of the message the three German greens brought to Newcastle was rather less welcome to delegates' ears. "What Die Grunen are saying to you, from their experience, is that you are now strong enough - you should be self-confident enough - to go out and be more open to cooperating with people. You should be less afraid of being tainted or categorised than you were a few years ago when you avoided being associated with the left, for instance, for fear of what people might say. Your independent position, standing beyond the left - right spectrum, which you felt was so important, was indeed important; but now it's time to move beyond that position, towards some of these people who are ready to come a step towards you. And to do that without saying, 'Before we are prepared to have anything to do with you, you must leave the Labour Party, declare that you have been wrong for the last 20 years and join the Green Party.'"

I couldn't help but recall the knee-jerk response of many Green Party members towards any such dialogue or

alliance, and their apparent refusal to see any good at all in their political "opponents": how I wished that some of the political maturity (and sheer radical understanding) of the German Greens could manifest itself in the Green Party in this country.

When I asked Jakob whether the Green Party here was really "Political" with a capital "P" (I mentioned its record in campaigning - or even making policy - on women's issues, or the Third World, for instance) I was interested to hear that the socialist members of the Die Grunen used to be sceptical of the politics of the British Ecology Party, but that they had changed their minds when they heard from friends on the left here that the British party had been "very strong and forceful in its support both moral and financial for the striking miners". He explained that the closer you get to political influence, the harder it is to remain a single issue party:

"We know the environmental issue overrides everything else, but at the same time you are not going to get very far if you refuse to have answers to these other questions - especially when you have to face the accusation of being a middle class party of people who have now got it so good that they have time to care about the environment. In Germany people dug up sayings of the Nazis and fascists which showed that they too cared about the environment, and insinuated that there was some kind of continuity there; so we went in and gave support to the minorities, which showed very clearly that there was no continuity of ideology. Moreover, the rights of minorities (and with women, we're talking about the majority) are all the more important to protect when you're basically proposing deep and very far reaching changes to society which are going to be upsetting for quite a large number of people. What the nuclear power industry says about half the lights going out isn't true, but we're not just talking about nuclear power: half the chemical industry needs to be shut down as soon as possible because the potential dangers are enormous.

"This is obviously going to mean widespread dislocation in society, so it's even more important that people who are already underprivileged don't feel even more threatened. Any green party who wants to be taken seriously must be very strong on human rights, the rights of minorities, and the rights of women."



ELECTION HOPES

While at the conference, I also spoke to JEAN LAMBERT, convenor of the Green Party's General Election Committee, about the party's plans and priorities for the General Election. She was confident that the party would make its target of 150 candidates, about a third of them women. Keynote issues for the campaign would be nuclear issues, both energy and weaponry, but also employment and economics: it was these issues, Jean felt, that makes the Green Party very different from any other political party.

Economics for the Greens means the Basic Income Scheme, "designed to replace the present total mess of the benefits system by giving everybody a guaranteed income as of right. There's no question of losing out because you're earning slightly too much, or because you've got slightly too much in the bank. And because you don't lose money if you take up part-time or low-paid work, nobody will be worse off because they work: the Basic Income Scheme prevents the poverty trap."

The party doesn't expect to get any MPs - "we're quite clear on that!" - but Jean felt that the target of a saved deposit was a worthwhile ambition: "That

5% threshold is psychologically very important to us because of the connection with the German Greens. But what people are looking most of all to gain from it is a vote of confidence in Green politics by at least hanging on to, if not increasing, the vote they got last time. There's also this perhaps unusual way of working, that we put pressure increasingly on other parties; that a vote for the Green Party is very definitely a vote for something very positive, and there's no doubt that other parties are taking notice of that."

I put it to her that many people were saying that Greens should vote tactically, and this would mostly mean voting Labour or Alliance: could you, I asked her, vote Green and be tactical? "It's back to this issue of putting pressure on other parties. Every Green vote worries the other parties, who believe they have a God-given right to the votes. Looking at the Greens for a Labour Victory campaign, and the suggestion that in some seats we shouldn't even be standing, there's no doubt that the other parties are worrying about us: voting Green, if you want to look at it tactically, is likely to bring about changes in the other parties, so a Green vote is a tactical vote as well as a positive one. It's more likely to bring about quick change on the sort of issues we're looking at than if you vote second best and vote Alliance or Labour."

o In 1979 the then Ecology Party fielded just over 50 candidates and polled an average 1.6%. In 1983, with 109 candidates, the average poll fell to 1.1%. In the European elections of 1984 the party fielded 15 candidates, polling an average of 2.68%.

o The North-West Area of the party in April asked the central Party Council to seek Paul Ekins' resignation, on the grounds that the Tactical Voting campaign which he had helped initiate was causing embarrassment to their candidates. It was said that half the seats being contested by the Green Party in the area were targeted by TV 87, and that journalists were cashing in on the fact that the campaign was initiated by a Green Party member. Council decided to reject the request, with one vote against and a number of abstentions.

o The Green Party has moved its London office to much larger premises at 10 Station Parade, Balham High Road, London SW12 9AZ (corner of Balham High Road and Ravenstone Road, two minutes walk from Balham tube). The new telephone number is 01-873 0045 (3 lines). Offers of office furniture will be very gladly received!

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

TOES is holding two events in London this month. On May 2 (10-5) there is a Campaigning Teach-In on the Brundtland Report, chaired by Norman Myers and Des Wilson (cost £7/£4). The Brundtland Commission was set up by the UN in 1984, and its report (to be published on April 27) is expected to make clear the links between environment and development and the need for conservation and sustainability. Venue: Regent's College, Regents Park, NW1. On May 13 at 7.30 in Friends House, Euston Road NW1 there's a rally for Conservation and Sustainability, with speakers including a member of the Commission: tickets £4/£2 in advance, or £5/£3 on the door (20% off for bookings for 5 or more).

On June 4 (7.30 pm at Friends House) TOES' Rally for Urban Renewal celebrates community initiatives in response to urban decay both here and in the Third World.

Leaflets from TOES, 27 Thames House, South Bank Business Centre, 140 Battersea Park Road, London SW11 4NB [01-827 4760].

Zircon: How free are the media?

JIM HARRIS

THE ZIRCON affair raises a series of very disturbing issues which highlight the erosion of our fundamental democratic freedoms.

Without the knowledge of Parliament, this government embarked on a military project costing £500m, thereby breaching a solemn agreement that Parliament would never be deceived about expensive military projects.

Our democracy is based on the tenet that MPs are accountable to, and represent, the interest of the electorate. In this case the government has launched a programme which Parliament had no way of questioning, nor could it ensure that the £500m was being well spent or was even in the country's best interest. "It is outrageous that such sums are being spent on military hardware while we are still unable to provide adequate heating, food and shelter for everyone in this country - or in the Third World," said a Green Party spokesperson.

The real secret of the affair is the government's lie, not any supposed breach of national security. This is the reason for the government's attempts to suppress information in the BBC Secret Society programme. The Green Party has strongly condemned the major parties in Parliament who, through a special agreement, ensure there will be no debate on national security projects or issues.

The government has yet to lay any charges under the Official Secrets Act following the Special Branch raids on the New Statesman, the BBC's Scottish offices, and the home of Duncan Campbell. The raids can only be seen as punitive action against those journalists and news agencies which brought the information to light and, in short, were defending the public's right to know about this national scandal. Such a deliberate campaign to intimidate investigative journalists seriously threatens the freedom of our media.

The attack on the BBC is one more in a series of orchestrated attacks on the BBC designed to discredit it. It threatens one of the greatest institutions in this country: unbiased, independent broadcasting. The resignation of Alastair Milne and the recent decision by the new Director General, Michael Checkland, to shelve the remaining five 'Secret Society' programmes are the proof in the pudding that the government's campaign is being successful.

◦ Jim Harris is a member of the NUJ and a freelance media and PR consultant living in London.

PANKHURST PICNIC

The fourth annual Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Peace Picnic takes place on Sun May 17 at her anti-aerial bombing monument, High Road, Woodford Wells (opp. Horse and Well). Morris dancing and an address by a woman from the Eritrean Relief Assn. Sylvia Pankhurst espoused the cause of Haile Selassie, who aimed to unite Eritrea and Ethiopia. Organised by Wanstead and Woodford Women for Peace, who "make symbolic amends by raising funds whenever we can to support the women of Eritrea." Info: Sylvia on 01-504 1630.



Challenging the nuclear state

BARRY MAYCOCK writes:

THE SPECTACLE of Thatcher in Moscow has been enough to turn the strongest stomachs. How they love it, these 'world leaders', the chance to strut and posture in the limelight, carefully fostering the illusion of 'making history', masquerading as their favourite characters in a favourite work of fiction! How radiant they suddenly become, how they glow from all the attention! The problem is whether mediocrities like Thatcher, these pygmies on the world stage with their puny 'elections', can even begin to come to grips with the problems our planet faces - to repeat a memorable phrase, I would refuse even to acknowledge their existence, were it not for the harm that they do.

Though we all know that these Emperors haven't really any clothes, I must admit that they sell themselves very well. It's quite an achievement after all to sell a defence policy based on retaliatory genocide and present it as a policy for 'peace'! And now nuclear power is being paraded as an environmental asset! In a defection that has received much publicity, Messrs Searle and Pritchard, erstwhile prominent Greens, have waved goodbye forever to tattered placards, and are giving credibility to a process whereby industrialists are turning overnight into concerned environmentalists! What next, I wonder? Bruce Kent doing PR work for the M.O.D.?

Meanwhile, down at the grassroots, we haven't many fat salaries to console us. Here are some different stories from a different world: In an incident a month or so ago, Juley from Orange Gate, Greenham Common, was warned early one morning by a friend that the bailiffs were approaching; she was still dressing when a bailiff arrived and pulled the tent down on top of her, dragged her from the tent and threw all her possessions (including clothes and money) into the truck before departing. The police did nothing to help. A few days before, a woman was knocked down by a Dodge returning to Greenham, driven by a British serviceman, which had accelerated into her and did not stop. And so on, and so on.

In spite of incidents like these, endless court appearances, and continual prison sentences, the women's camp at Greenham is as strong as ever - court cases at Newbury and Devizes (where Cruisewatchers are also on trial) have completely disrupted the workings of the courts, and endless test-cases make the application of repressive bye-laws inoperable. The nuclear state is directly challenged, and justice shown to be the charade it is.

So many initiatives, so much creative energy has come from Greenham over the years that its influence has been all-pervasive, and thus often invisible. In fact the peace movement has in many ways fed off this energy without really acknowledging it. It sometimes seems as if Greenham has pulled Cruisewatch along, which in turn pulls CND, which pulls the Labour Party (or tries to). And all this in the face of media abuse, male violence and intimidation, vicious court sentencing, and often the scepticism and incomprehension of large sections of the peace movement.

Molesworth contrast

What a contrast to Molesworth, the confusion surrounding the credibility of the mixed camp there, the anguish over the rapes that have occurred. To have the rapes at Molesworth discussed at all at such length by strangers in public must be infinitely painful for those involved; but any kind of conspiracy of silence is surely even more painful. CND and 'Sanity' have called for opinions, and I would simply add this: that as far as the peace camp is concerned, the place should surely be women-only, if it is to function at all. It is not for me as a man to recommend what initiatives women should take in this respect: I merely urge other men to withdraw from the camp and from mixed actions there. Mixed support groups are necessary, and rightly so; and Molesworth, or whatever the counterpart of Cruisewatch will be, would also be mixed. I know, however, that such a solution would not receive the support of CND and the wider peace movement.

The reason for this seems to be that Greenham, and what Greenham means, has never after all these years been fully understood and accepted by the peace movement as a whole - or rather it is accepted grudgingly as a 'one-off' situation, a 'token' women's space (like a women's page in a newspaper). So what are people afraid of? That Molesworth will be 'less effective' as a women-only camp? Surely Greenham is immeasurably more effective as a result. And what are men afraid of? Of being excluded? Surely we forfeit our right to be included, again and again. Men must change, and if we cannot change by our own initiative, we will be forced to change, whether we like it or not. We must take risks, and the peace movement similarly, with all the courage it has shown in exposing the ugly realities of the nuclear state. Otherwise the issue of Molesworth will not go away, indeed will continue to haunt and disturb the peace movement.

◦ More overleaf



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FROM 2 PM PROMPT





Women's Links



At a time when CND and peace groups throughout the country were agonizing over support for the miners' strike - it was considered 'too political' and of course coal mines look unsightly from the perspective of green leafy suburbs - women from Greenham were unashamedly making links with Women Against Pit Closures, marching together in solidarity and support. These strong links still remain, and are demonstrated on 'WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISARMAMENT', from noon Saturday MAY 23rd to noon Sunday MAY 24th. The action is being co-ordinated by women's link, an initiative of Durham Women Against Pit Closures and Greenham.

They are calling for 24 hours of local actions by women to demonstrate the connections between the destruction of the mining communities, the development of nuclear power, the nuclear arms race and the risk to the earth's survival. NVDA and vigils will be conducted as part of the women's campaign to break the nuclear chain, culminating with a four-minute silence on Sunday and the planting of crosses and burial symbols. For details contact the various regional co-ordinators. 'WOMEN LINKING WORLDWIDE CELEBRATE OUR POWER FOR CHANGE'.

Scotland: Merle (0875 612235)
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Laura Ashley boycott

DON'T BUY FROM LAURA ASHLEYS - SUPPORT LOW-PAID WOMEN WORKERS ON STRIKE! Twenty-one women from Ardbride Products in Ardrossan, Scotland, have been on strike since September 1988. After protesting about pay and appalling conditions, they were sacked, and have since received little union support. Ardbride supplies Laura Ashleys with lampshades. Please send donations and letters of support to Anna Druggen, 28d Montgomerie St., Ardrossan, KA22 8EQ, Scotland.

Women's petition

The WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK CAMPAIGN has sent out a letter, addressed to the Prime Minister, for groups and organisations to sign; the letter urges her to implement the UN decision to count all women's work, waged and unwaged, in the gross national product. (The GNP is supposed to be the total value of goods and services produced, but so far includes only goods and services exchanged for money. Women's unwaged work, estimated to produce as much as 50% of the GNP, has been left out). Contact the King's Cross Women's Centre, 71 Tonbridge Street, London WC1. 01.837.7509.

PEACE DIARY

MAY 2,3 - WOMEN'S PACIFIC CONFERENCE - a national conference for women on Pacific issues. Details from 26 Chalk Hill Road, Norwich, Norfolk (tel. Norwich 611368 or 631007).

MAY 15 - ANTI-NUCLEAR PARLIAMENT. This is a brilliant and intriguing idea from Essex CND - there will be a people's parliament, a public assembly in Parliament Square on May 15th p.m. onwards. This will be in contrast to the largely r... assembly in the building... a curious collection of men in dark suits (... of clothing usually... undertakers) s... in a passable limit... g Image, and pass laws... protection. The mass sit... p.m. Essex CND will put... touch with local contr... 0245.420178. "WHO'S AFF... asked Jimmy Johns, an... demonstration for his... Public Order Act, and he laus... Obviously a kindred spirit... important not to be intimidated by it whether it is used extensively or not. After all, they've always had all the laws they need, dating back to the 13th century and beyond.

MAY 2nd: Sponsored bike ride for the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign. For registration forms, send a sae to NSC Bike Ride, 23 Bevendon Street, London N1.

MAY 3rd: Join a human chain for jobs - we demand effective action on unemployment! If you want to help, contact 'Hands Across Britain', Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ (tel. 01.582.8258).

MAY 4th: Third Procession of Prayer for Peace at Molesworth, starting at noon. Concerned Christians invite participation. Contact 060684.3376.

MAY 8th: Chernobyl: Lessons for London. The Hogarth Hall, Chiswick Town Hall, W4.

MAY 9th: PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN. Annual Conference and AGM at Birmingham Friends' Meeting House; speakers include Clare Short MP and the NCCL. Contact the Peace Tax Campaign on 01.739.5088.

MAY 24th: 'Strike A Chord' concert at Leeds Civic Theatre to celebrate the work of women in the peace movement. Tel. 463988.

MAY 29th-31st: DISARM THE SEAS! An international protest action at ports, harbours and on islands against the militarisation of the oceans. Various actions are planned, including, on May 30th, a national Scottish CND demonstration 'Hands Across the Tay'. There is also the voyage of the 'Peace Messenger', a ship which will be touring the west coast of Britain and Ireland, making various stops en route. Contacts: Scottish CND, 420 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 [041 331 2828], Janet Convery at Underwood Street [01-250 4010], Jim Skinner, Portsmouth CND [0705.823127].

MAY 30th: YCND demonstration. Assemble 12 noon Clapham Common. March to Kennington Park; contact YCND at Underwood Street, London N1 7JG.

JUNE 6th: PEACE PENTECOST. The annual Christian CND act of witness. Held this year at USAF Croughton and Upper Heyford. Interestingly it's also a USAF Upper Heyford open day on June 6th - an opportunity for some mischief!



US Greens hold national gathering

'BUILDING THE Green Movement: a National Conference for a New Politics' will be a national gathering of greens and activists in kindred social change movements. Sponsored by the Committees of Correspondence (an umbrella facilitative group which exists to provide communication among the countless local green groups, parties and organisations now sprung up in the US), it will take place over the Fourth of July weekend this summer, July 2 - 7, at Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts. Costs are estimated at around \$20 a day for food and lodging.

The gathering is billed not as a decision making congress for the green movement, but as serving a primarily educational purpose - a chance for greens and activists in kindred movements across the country to meet, share perspectives, and get to know one another. It will be open to the public.

Each day there will be structured workshops by invited presenters, together with open workshops that can be convened by whoever takes the initiative. In the evenings, invited keynote speakers will address the day's theme; these will include Greens from all over the world. Speakers from other countries will address the gathering after registration on the first evening; Friday's theme will be "The Roots of the Green Movement: History and Philosophy"; Saturday's will be "The Greens and Electoral Politics"; Sunday, "Green Economics"; Monday, "Building a Green Movement in America"; and Tuesday, "Where Do We Go from Here?"

The invited presenters and speakers will be "people who are active in Green and kindred social change movements, not merely academics or authors who write about us." Their papers will be published subsequently. A Green Alternative Fair will run concurrently with the speakers and workshops, with stalls, demonstrations, exhibits, music, food and entertainment. In the late evenings there will be socials with live music, and on July 4 a Green celebration of the Declaration of Independence, with Green reflections on what it means for a second American revolution in our time.

Information and registration forms from: National Green Gathering Working Group, c/o New England CoC, PO Box 703, White River Junction, VT05001, USA.

GREEN CENTRE PLANNED

The GreenHouse is a new venture planned to occupy a renovated building in London EC2 a few minutes from Old Street tube station. With 6 floors of 1000 sq ft each, the building will offer a vegetarian restaurant and social area, a computer resource and printing area, three floors of offices for green organisations, and a floor of meeting rooms, seminar rooms, etc. The management structure will be cooperative.

The idea has been developed by GreenNet, a communications network linking environmental and peace groups around the world by computers. They are looking for investors who are interested in buying a share of the freehold. Open meetings are held at 2pm every Weds at GreenNet, 17 Mackeson Road, NW3 (phone 01-267 0188 to check first). Or write



LIVING GREEN

Living Green is edited by GRAHAM HOOPER.

BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

TO FOLLOW ON last month's horticultural thread, some gardening readers may be interested in bio-dynamic gardening/farming. Although similar to organic husbandry, bio-dynamic agriculture is different in a number of ways.

The methods originated through the inspiration of Rudolf Steiner, the noted scientist and philosopher. The central principle is that the garden or farm is treated as a unique living entity in its own right, with the personality of the gardener/farmer seen as an integral part of each organism.

The various bio-dynamic measures include herbal preparations to regulate the breakdown of compost materials to stable and active humus, and preparations to strengthen soil life and the influences of light on foliage, flowers and fruit. As the health of the garden is built up, attacks by pests and diseases become rarer and less intense.

The Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association promotes bio-dynamic methods, publishing a members newsletter and a magazine, "Star and Furrow". It also supplies preparations and consultant advice to members. Interested people can contact them at Woodman Lane, Clent, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 9PX.



Recipe

MUSHROOM CRUMBLE

To make crumble:
6oz wholemeal flour
pinch of salt
4-6 tbsp oil

To make mushroom mixture:
1lb mushrooms
3 sticks celery
1/2lb onions
1/2pt cider
1tbsp flour
1tbsp oil
salt

Mix flour and salt together. Add enough oil to make a fairly moist crumble. Chop onions and celery. Saute in oil until soft. Add flour and stir in cider. Simmer gently for 10 minutes until the mixture is thick. Chop the mushrooms in halves or quarters as necessary. Add to sauce, adding salt to taste. Pour into casserole dish and sprinkle crumble over the top. Bake for 45 mins / 1 hour at 325°F (170°C, gas Mark 3).

o Recipe by Andy Kaye, using ingredients grown in this country.

ALTERNATIVES CATALOGUE

Practical Alternatives have brought out a "Catalogue and Guide to Home Energy Saving". The Catalogue shows some new approaches to home energy saving that do not depend on spending large amounts on full house insulation, new heating systems and complicated controls.

The techniques in the catalogue could be used in any house and enabled an old stone house on top of a Welsh hill to be heated, with three comfortable rooms, with an annual energy consumption near that claimed by the Dept. of Energy for a well insulated house in Milton Keynes.

The catalogue covers methods of heating, condensation control (a vital consideration when energy saving), ventilation techniques, dampness control and prevention, energy saving lighting and other things, including the Eco-Lavatory (see GL 48) and even a more energy efficient way of washing the dishes.

Among the techniques mentioned is "round the clock heating". This involves the use of round the clock storage heaters of a design which can be placed under windows - to counteract draught - in rooms where heat is most needed; the heaters can provide an even background heat for a lower fuel consumption and relatively low initial outlay.

All the equipment mentioned in the catalogue can be obtained from Practical Alternatives by mail order along with some other goods and services. As well as being a sales catalogue it is also quite useful for the interesting ideas and advice in it. Interested people can obtain it from P.A.'s new address: Victoria House, Bridge Street, Rhayader, Powys LD6 5AG, tel: (0597) 810929.

'GREEN LINE' MANIFESTO

The Vegetarian Society are calling on their members and supporters to commit general election candidates to their "Green Line Manifesto". The Manifesto's ten points are:-

1. Policies for the nation's food and health must be vested in the Department of Health, which must emphasise 'prevention rather than cure' far more effectively.
2. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and food must be stimulated to shift inducements from intensive food production to the development of woodlands and recreational areas, the preservation of sites of special interest and the conservation of wildlife.

These changes would comprehend the rating and subsidisation of farming, like any other industry.

3. The MAFF's advisory services must be directed to low-input cultivation and help for newcomers to farming, smallholding and horticultural enterprises.
4. The trend in 'ornamental' farming and horticulture must be extended to beautify now-derelict inner cities.
5. The national sewerage system, like the roads and railways, must urgently be overhauled to realise, with treated municipal wastes, a national resource for land improvement.

6. The recommendations of the government-appointed Farm Animal Welfare Council must be implemented urgently, with welfare unequivocally paramount, in laws rather than codes.

Such immediate reforms must anticipate the early closure of livestock auctions, halt the grading of live animals (which entails cruel mutilation as a token in the award of subsidies on their meat), oust antiquated methods of slaughtering (as still used in this country by Jews and Muslims) and prevent exports of

animals to countries continuing such objectionable methods.

7. Experimentation on animals in the interests of production must be deemed ineligible for licences under the recent Scientific Procedures Act.
8. All handlers and transporters of farm livestock must be trained, examined, certified and licensed.
9. School conditions and syllabuses must be enriched with far more consideration to food, health and well-being. A wider repertoire of attractively-presented fare must be provided in schools, hospitals and other institutions.
10. The proceedings of all official enquiries into the farming and food industries must be open, with full access to information, and the credentials and affiliations of all members of such official bodies must be disclosed.

Copies of the Manifesto are available from the Vegetarian Society, Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire. WA14 4QG, or from The Vegetarian Centre, 53 Marloes Road, London W8 6LA.

ANIMAL NEWS

OXFORD EXPERIMENTS

ON MONDAY 6th April at Central Hall, Westminster, Animal Aid held a press conference giving details of a new campaign against animal experiments at Oxford University. A particular target of the campaign is Professor Colin Blakemore along with his colleagues at the Department of Physiology, who have been carrying out sight deprivation experiments involving either stitching up the eyelids, rearing in darkness or removing the eyes of young monkeys and cats in their secret laboratories. Students themselves are speaking out about this disgusting work. One has recently complained: "The worst offenders are the researchers and scientists upstairs on 'Level F' - these are the members of the Department and they are so worried that people will find out how awful their experiments are that the security system is like Colditz. No ordinary mortal can go up there. You have to have passes that can open special steel doors; even the lifts don't go up there, and there are no stairs and no windows... We know that kittens have their eyes sewn up at birth, monkeys have electrodes prodded into their skulls through a hole while awake - what else goes on? Why can't they let us see?"

For anyone wishing to write, here are the names, numbers and prison addresses of those convicted of the ALF activities, reported in last month's Green Line:

Ronnie Lee V02682
Kevin Baldwin T02959

Gary Cartwright T02860 Ian Oxley T02861
Brendan McNally P03014
John Hewson T08725
HM Prison, Armley, Leeds, W.Yorks LS12 2TJ

Isabel Facer
Julie Rodgers
HM Remand Centre, Warrington Road,
Risley, Warrington, Cheshire (092576) 3871

Vivian Smith P34583
HM Prison, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK94HR.

The full list of animal rights prisoners can be obtained from Support Animal Rights Prisoners, BCM Box 5911, London, WC1N3XX (Tel. 01.888.2482).

How Tactical Voting could be Green

PAUL EKINS

HOW DEPRESSING it is to hear Green Party spokespeople parroting the tired old politics of Kinnock, Steel and Owen in their condemnation of tactical voting at the next election. What a shame they can't realise that by supporting TV '87 (the tactical voting campaign) the Green Party would have nothing to lose (see below), and could make a really positive, cooperative and distinctive contribution to the next election. It could also help rid Britain of Thatcherism.

So why has the Green Party got nothing to lose?

The Green Party is fielding about 150 candidates (25% of the total). TV '87 is concentrating on about 150 seats. Statistically it is likely that the two groupings will overlap in only about 35 seats. Thus, 115 of the seats contested by the Green Party will not be tactical seats and TV '87 will not have a presence there. The 35 seats at issue are, by definition, Tory marginals (that was why TV '87 chose them). They will be among the most hotly contested seats in the election. With or without TV '87, the Green Party will not get more than a handful of votes in those seats. An election strategy keen to make the best use of scarce resources would have avoided them in the first place, as certain money down the drain. The few stalwart voters in those constituencies who are going to vote Green despite the phenomenal squeeze that is certain to be operative anyway are not going to be deterred by tactical voting. TV '87 will not make a shred of difference to those diehards and the Green vote will be unaffected.

So what has the Green Party, and green politics, and all of non-Thatcherite Britain got to gain from tactical voting?

In a word, hope.

First, the Green Party's benefits. At the most opportunistic level, TV '87 gives the party an opportunity to say something positive and quite different from the other opposition parties about a subject of realpolitik which is going to dominate the whole election. Make no mistake, it is only as a result of widespread tactical voting that Thatcher can lose the next election. With such voting, she cannot possibly win it. Tactical voting is as important as that. With some imagination, the Green Party could have picked up the issue, taking a really strong anti-Thatcher line, expressing its support for tactical voting as a practical, positive response to the evils of Thatcherism and exposing Kinnock's humbug on this issue. With such a message, people would listen to the Green Party for a change, partly because its support for tactical voting could make a difference in some very close seats, partly because editors of sympathetic national newspapers would want to feature it. But no. It opts instead for the utterly predictable, parochial response of Labour and the Alliance. Pity.

Leaving opportunism aside, have any of the Green Party's leaders actually sat down and thought about what another four years of Thatcher means for their organisation? Have they looked in the eye the utter futility during those years of any sort of radical campaigning, the hopelessness of achieving progressive change? Worse, how do they think they are going to build the spirit of cooperation and social cohesion which are essential to persuading people to vote Green, when a further term of Thatcher and Tebbit has rendered absolute the already bitter divisions and

inequities in our battered society?

But if Thatcher were not re-elected, no party would have an overall majority in Parliament. Thatcher would go, her spell broken (especially if the Tories were not even the largest party, which widespread tactical voting would render most likely), and the whole political scene would be wide open. Of course, nothing might emerge from this, but so might a whole heap of things which could put the Green Party on the political map: PR for the European elections in 1989, perhaps, maybe even for local elections, and there could even be a major political realignment with Greens from all political parties and from none finally making common cause.

Widening the focus from the Green Party to green politics generally, think of the gains to be won by a Labour / Alliance coalition: Freedom of Information instead of the Official Secrets Act; no Sizewell B, more of other energy sources, including renewables; no Trident and a government that actually cares about disarmament; action on acid rain; and a chance for Greens really to home in on the opposition parties' commitments to 'green' or 'sustainable' economic growth. Put beside another four years of Thatcher, such a prospect is a green Nirvana to anyone who isn't imprisoned by irrelevant and counter-productive organisational loyalty.

Come on Greens, we're meant to be different. We don't have to be Labour / Alliance look-alikes on this issue. Or do you really not care about getting Thatcher out?

o Paul Ekings was made a life member of the Green Party in recognition of his services as its General Secretary, was the first Director of TOES, and is one of the founders of TV '87 ("Tactical Voting '87"). He now works for Right Livelihood Foundation at the Bradford School of Peace Studies.

Greens for a Labour Victory

58 Mickle Way Forest Hill Oxford
Tel. Wheatley (08677) 2679

■ WILL THE GREEN PARTY WIN THE BALANCE OF POWER AT THE GENERAL ELECTION AND HALT NUCLEAR POWER?

■ CAN THE ALLIANCE BE TRUSTED NOT TO MAKE A DEAL WITH A MINORITY TORY GOVERNMENT OVER SIZEWELL?

The answer to both these questions is, of course, NO. Yet every green knows that the result of the General Election will be crucial to the future of the nuclear power industry. What we believe is that in the absence of a Green Party able to win some influence, only the Labour Party can now stop Sizewell.

For that reason, and to ensure that its other radical environmental policies - OUR GREEN POLICIES - are put into practice, we will be supporting the Labour Party at the next election. As people who also want to see an end to nuclear power in this country, we think you should support Labour too.

Joe Weston, Victor Anderson, Nicola Hallam, Andrew Smith, David Pepper, Martin Stott.

I want to support the Greens for a Labour Victory Campaign, and I enclose a £10 donation to help pay for advertising and leaflet production.

Signed

Address

I do / do not give permission for my name to be used in advertising the campaign.

Greens for a Labour Victory is NOT a Labour Party initiative.

Constructive Abstention

PETER CADOGAN

BRIG OUBRIDGE (GL51) has outlined three strategies for the General Election - those of Greens for Labour, Tactical Voting, and the Green Party. But he has left out the fourth option: Constructive Abstention.

There are very good reasons why we should take this option seriously. In the 1979 election the abstention rate was 24%. In 1983 it was 27%, and in the next election it may well reach 30%. There is off a third of the population! Least of all Greens!

Even the casual study of the problem to date reveals that hundreds of thousands, even millions of these abstainers will be young people so deeply disillusioned with the party-political system that they deliberately opt out. It is not a question of apathy. What can they do? They can start by boycotting the voting ritual; and that is what is going to happen.

As things are at the moment, they will do it as disenfranchised loners without a voice. Can we listen to them and articulate what they have to say? Can we do enough homework to find out how it is we have got to this sorry pass? This means understanding the built-in limitations of representative democracy as such. Westminster and Whitehall can never provide the answer to our problems because they are its cause. We need to find a way to transcend them - to invent our constitutional future on new lines. For this we need a Green political theory which we have not got, yet.

* ANY TOTALITARIAN
CAN DREAM UP
A VOTING SYSTEM *

Real democracy is not about voting. Any totalitarian can dream up a voting system, and most of them do. Voting can become a rubber stamp for party-fixers manipulating the tyranny of the majority; and that is the way we are going at the moment, surrounded by look-alike parties.

Proper democracy is about active citizenship and dynamic work relationships. When substantial numbers (not necessarily a majority) take part in the day-to-day processes of decision making in matters of government and the work process, then we have democracy. It has a municipal base, a professional base, an industrial base, and above all a volunteer base. The fact that so many people are still deceived by the voting ritual, and cannot think beyond it, is fair comment on the way we have been conditioned to our present political servitude.

The German Greens seem to have got it about right. They centre their activity on their autonomous decentralised movement and regard the parliamentary plane as useful, quite important, but essentially secondary. What follows for us?

All those amongst us who still believe in Westminster and Whitehall will, one takes it, vote for the party of their choice or vote tactically. So be it! Why waste time arguing about it? Let them do what they do with conviction, carry the green case in every direction, and follow their noses. I happen to think that at the end of the day, they will come up against the impossibilities of centralism and have second thoughts - but be that as it may. What of those who take principled objection to centralism? It calls for a package.

o Understanding and vision. Can we imagine what kind of values and

relationships we want the society of the future to enshrine? And then work back to the present (and the origins of the present) in order to identify the embryos of the future that are today around and within us? Then get to work on them. This means we need ideas, a theory, philosophy, just as much as we need forms of action. Without such assets we shall always founder in short-term thinking - the very thing that party politicians cannot escape from.

o Timing. Looking back we can see that most of the time the movement and its ideas are in the condition of slow growth or slow decay. At irregular and unpredictable intervals there are short traumas in the course of which we change plateau up or down. The time scale is mostly in charge of itself and there is not much we can do about its rate and character. We have to understand it, work with it, and occasionally take off from it. If we misread it or try to push it, we are our own undoing. The situation calls for a judicious mixture of patience and creative opportunism.

o Structure. We have learnt that creativity fructifies in small groups - single figures. This is vital to the new undiscovered Green political dimension. But there are two kinds of groups: single issue, and general purpose. So far 'general purpose' organisation has been left to churches and political parties, and we shall not be able to succeed them until we have learnt how to do it better. This is why a philosophy and an acknowledged classical literature are so

important. At present our foundations are shallow and bio-centric; we have barely started to consider what social ecology might amount to. To get our ideas and our relationships straight, we need some new kind of group system with enduring foundations - not just affinity groups for the next demo!

o Action. Ideas and action are our polarities. The pity is that our empirical tradition tends to force us into one at the expense of the other - activism or the Ivory tower. It doesn't have to be like that. But in the beginning was the deed, and action will always be the ultimate test. (See John Macmurray's 'The Self as Agent' on this.) It is the test, but it is part of a polarity, and nothing human happens without understanding and imagination.

The immediate test is how we handle the General Election. The first thing is for three or four people to meet in a given constituency and talk things over. No agenda. Britain will go into a political fizz for three weeks - how to make the most of it? There are different levels - taking the mickey, being serious, instant response to things as they happen, creative editing of posters (other people's), judicious intervention in the meetings of all political parties, stunt spectaculars, leaflets, posters, and the rest. And above all, making some new friends. The climactic moment will be the day after the election. Have we laid a new base for the future? Will a new autonomous green group emerge? Have we sold some ideas? Have we put new heart into people?

That's the way.



Emerson College

LIFEWAYS '87

THE QUEST
FOR BALANCE & HEALING
IN EVERYDAY LIFE

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SUMMER WORKSHOP
SUN. JULY 19th TO SAT. JULY 25th, 1987.

Speakers:

DR. JUSTIN O'BRIEN G.P. from the Marylebone Health Centre, London
HAZEL ADAMS Art Therapist from the Blackthorn Trust, Maidstone
TIJNO VOORS Lecturer from Emerson College, The Centre for Social Development,
Forest Row.

Morning workshops will include the following themes:

Healing through colour
Healing through music
Healing through meditation
The healing conversation
Homenursing
Our earth, ecology, nutrition
Healing of science and technology
Educating the whole child
Healing through community life

Morning crèche for small children and an activities programme for older children.

In the afternoons there will be:

Drama, painting, claywork, gardening, bookbinding, spinning,
music and pipemaking for adults and children.

Accommodation and meals available. Facilities for camping.

Forest Row, Sussex, England RH18 5JX. Tel: (0342 82) 2238.

Emerson College is a centre of adult education, training and research based on the work of Rudolf Steiner. The workshops will be offered by members of the College staff, together with others working for a new future.

GREEN INDIA

MARTIN STOTT

THE FIRST OF TWO ARTICLES
LOOKING AT SIGNS OF GREEN GROWTH
AMONG THE INDIAN GRASSROOTS



MY JOURNEY through India in the winter of 85/86 was my first extended visit to a developing country. It was of particular significance to me as someone who has been both consciously and unconsciously influenced in my way of life in the west by the spiritual element in political action of the Gandhian tradition, by its decentralist people-centred socialism, by its recognition of the necessary unity between humanity and nature. My purpose was to contribute in whatever way I could by sharing my experiences in this field in the west with the self-organised initiatives of the former workers and gas victims in Bhopal, attempting to rebuild their lives by constructing socially useful production alternatives from the ashes of that enormous tragedy. In this I was sponsored by Quaker Peace and Service. For me it was also a journey, an opportunity to learn about India at the grassroots, and about myself.

• Appropriate Science for Villages

What better place to start than the Centre of Science for Villages in Wardha, Maharashtra. Its purpose is to put Gandhian principles of decentralised economics into practice. It concentrates on developing alternative technology and applying it in the village context. It has a campus on two sites employing some 75 people under the directorship of Devendra Kumar, experimenting with Gobar gas, solar cookers, low energy housing construction, the production of paper and board from agricultural waste, biodynamic gardening projects, and much more. Its educational arm is a fortnightly poster-magazine in Marathi - the local language - distributed to over 1000 villages. Typical subject matter included the uses of the Neem tree, oral rehydration for infants, herbal medicine, gobar gas plants, and the smokeless chulla (cooker).

My arrival coincided with the start of the annual 'padyatra' through the villages of Maharashtra to commemorate the birthday of CSV's founder, the Gandhian economist J C Kumarappa. I am invited to join - an opportunity that enables me to experience rural India on foot. We set off after a brief ceremony and the distribution of roasted chickpeas and jaggari, Devendra Kumar at the head carrying a banner and walking in time to our chanting. Our baggage and the props for the evening education sessions in the village follow behind on a bullock cart. At a larger village, a meeting has been arranged for us in the local school. We are ushered onto the verandah; 250 children are sitting in the courtyard, boys on one side and girls on the other. After a brief ceremony including a song of welcome and the presentation of flowers, Devendra speaks. The speech is similar to one he will use throughout the trip, and I am used as a handy example. His theme is that while the people at Taljapur (or whichever village) look to Wardha, and the people of Wardha look to Nagpur, and the people of Nagpur look to Bombay, and the people of Bombay look to London for their idea of what is 'new', 'correct' and 'fashionable', there in the west people are returning to the villages of India to learn, and to find out what really matters.

After tea we leave this village and strike out across country along narrow dusty paths through fields of sorghum, wheat, linseed, and cotton intercropped with dal. We cross streams, balancing precariously on palm logs. As the sun sinks rapidly we pass people returning from the fields, men with fuel on their heads, women with fodder for the cattle. The cicadas begin to sing, the first stars appear. Twenty minutes later we enter a small village, cross the tree-lined square, thread our way between the houses and enter a courtyard. This is where we will stay. That evening our meeting is in the village hall. I'm a great source of interest. Small children crowd round the door as villagers come in attracted by the show that's "in town". We are presented with tea, and as the cups are collected up an old man says to Devendra, "He's the first white man I've ever seen." Devendra replies, "Yes, and this is the first Indian village he has ever seen." They laugh and everyone relaxes.

• Caves ...

This being my first visit to India, I took the occasional opportunities to visit sites of cultural and archaeological importance, Sanchi, Ellora, Ajanta and Elephanta Island.

◦ Buddha and child, Ellora (© M Stott)

Not only are the sites themselves fascinating, but they revealed something about India that I hadn't realised, the phenomenon of mass Indian tourism. While the crowds at Sanchi and Elephanta are restricted in size by their relative inaccessibility, this is not so at Ellora or Ajanta. Tourists are processed through the caves at a great rate, with visits to the key caves carefully controlled. Three parties of 20 each are allowed into the painted caves at Ajanta any one time, for 15 minutes each exactly. The larger caves are a free for all, absolutely packed with visiting coach or school parties - the school groups several hundred strong, strictly sex segregated with teachers with whistles at the front and rear.

The children charge through laughing and fighting, staring at the occasional bemused foreigner, posing for photographs, and getting clipped across the ear by their teachers. Strict opening hours mean that there's no such thing as a "quiet period" to visit and absorb the peace and tranquillity that must have reigned at some point. You have to get into the tumble and bustle here too. The guides who see these sites every day break the monotony by taking foreign groups round and allowing themselves the luxury of imparting "improving thoughts" to their charges. Our guide at Elephanta, an amusing and self-deprecating man, started out by announcing, "When I pick up this stick, this indicates that for the moment I have little more knowledge than you." As we came to the image of Agni, his commentary was enlivened with expositions on the dangers of nuclear war: "Here is the god of destruction and war. He says that the world will end through fire, not deluge, and as the superpowers continue to build more nuclear weapons, it looks as if his prophecy will come true ... The tragedy of Star Wars where lasers can destroy a whole city in three minutes ... In a nuclear war there will be no winners." When we reached a statue of the Buddha he warmed to his theme: "Meditation, the source of inner peace. There's no need for Indians to follow the western path of drugs when we have this. But the tragedy is that so many do..."

• ... and trains

Wherever I went I travelled by train. But you don't just travel on Indian trains, you live on them. Most journeys last 24 hours or longer. Getting a reserved berth in

second class is the thing. You can stretch out from 9 pm, when most people turn in, and the compartment with 75 souls is amazingly quiet all night until about 6 am, when the cold usually woke me up along with everyone else. A journey is usually timetabled to include a half-hour stop around now. It's when the hawkers do their best trade. On the platform the diversity is amazing; dosa, samosa, fruits and sweets of all kinds, peanuts, idli baji, tea, coffee, and soft drinks. The enterprising get aboard and rouse bleary travellers with their morning wares, a middle-aged man and a boy sell delicious channa in newspaper cones from an enormous basket - chickpeas, onion, chilli, tomato and coriander and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice for just 2 rs (12p). They are followed by two young men selling chai, one carries an evil looking black kettle with tea, the other follows with cups and saucers in a bucket of water. Finally comes a lone peasant woman with a wicker basket of bananas, hundreds of them all about to go soft. She sits in our carriage, wrinkled face and voluminous quantities of brightly coloured drapes gathered around her, until those bananas are sold. The price? Well, one rupee bought about 25 bananas, and as the already partly squashed ones below appeared the number gradually increased as she threw in two or three "whole" ones to compensate for the squashed.

After breakfast, when everyone is feeling better, the blind beggars come aboard, some with a stick, others led by a small child. Some sing, some play the accordion, and a few deliver lengthy incantations. A few people give 50 paise. Outside the cries of the sellers begin to attract people onto the platform. After a while the train hoots and, very slowly, moves off. People finish their purchases, trot along beside it, up the steps and through an open door.

Sometimes the wait for connections can be lengthy, especially at country stops. Each station has its own special character. My favourite was Vyara in south-eastern Gujarat. It's a Toy Town model writ large, clean and spacious with large spreading trees for shade and shrubs and hedges for decoration. The long, cool stone benches in front of the ticket office are ideal for sleeping on. For those who like to luxuriate in the three-hour wait for the next train, there's a complete set of dining room furniture set out under an awning;

◦ Potters making cylindrical roof tiles (© M Stott)



benches, wooden arm chairs, easy chairs, and a big round shining dining table.

The bustling city stations have displays of uplifting posters on their walls. "Travel light - plan your journey - plan your family" says one, showing a family of four boarding a train. "Ticketless travel is a social evil" says another sternly. The bookstalls are packed with books and magazines. The favourite titles? "The Master Guide to Bank Recruitment Tests", "How to Write Better Applications for Jobs", "Science for Competitive Examinations," "Achieve Success and Happiness" ("A book of boundless optimism and joyful living that will fill your life with excitement and achievement"), "Great Feats of Indian Cricket", and "How to Win at Everything".

The cover stories on the magazines have a common theme. Whether it's the Indian equivalent of Radio Times or New Society, the Princess Diana of the Indian media is Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. His beatific face smiling out from the cover is a guarantee of massively increased sales. The cover of this week's issue of the gossip magazine Society Scoop screams, "The Oregon orgies: the never - before - disclosed happenings in Rajneeshpuram!" plus "An update on the mysterious Ma Anand Sheela."

• Seva Mandir

My travels took me to Udiapur in Southern Rajasthan. It's one of India's most exotic and beautiful cities. I came to visit the rural development group Seva Mandir who work with landless labourers and tribal people in the mountains to the south of the city. Seva Mandir specialises in an ecological approach to development, with an extensive social forestry programme and a series of 'ecology camps' for tribal people. These camps are held where tribal people live, and visitors from town can't just go there on impulse: the logistics are too complicated. I was fortunate to be visiting when extra hands were needed to transport equipment down to a camp for an evening film show. Myself, Prasad the 'block coordinator', the driver and two technicians set off by jeep with all the equipment, which included a generator attached to a trailer at the back. The road was narrow, bumpy, but tarred. After an hour or so we turned off the road onto a dirt track and through the last village with a bus service. Just beyond this village the track ends. Our journey continues along paths meant for people and cattle, gradually becoming steeper and more indistinct. The driver isn't very familiar with the terrain and has to be cajoled. At times it is so steep that

we struggle to the top of a ridge and can't see the path below. The terrain is more like giant egg boxes, dozens of little hills close together.

It takes five hours to reach the 'village'. Scattered around are large mud huts. There is no specific village, it's a collection of dwellings perhaps 200 metres apart and spread across the hilltops, with the household fields in the depressions below. The jeep stops in a small natural amphitheatre between some hillocks. This is the spot where we will show the films. It's the home of the Meena tribe and the location of the nine-day ecology camp, a mixture of practical sessions, social forestry, water conservation, herbal plants, combined with discussions and audio-visual material. There are no roads, the terrain is too steep for cars, so transport is by foot only. The nearest 'proper' village is 12 km away, but Prasad expects over 1,000 people tonight, people who have walked all day for this final event of the eco-camp.

After dusk the temperature dropped like a stone. The sky was absolutely clear; no moon, and more stars than I've ever seen before. The crowd crouched on the hillsides of our natural amphitheatre, faces lit by the reflection of the light projected onto the screen. The programme was a mixture of health and birth control pieces, newsreel, and Seva Mandir's integrated rural development film which included a section on life in Indian cities - mostly shot in Bombay, by the look of it, with slums, traffic, crowds, pollution and the metro. The crowd gasped at the pictures of trains, not surprisingly as wheeled transport of any kind would be almost unknown. Being beyond the end of the road, the impact of the wider economy is minimal. Here for the first time in India, I see a society in approximate ecological balance. The hillsides are green, not bare, the streams are clean, and the fields are fertilised naturally. The house I stay in has no loo - "just go anywhere you like in the fields."

Seva Mandir operates five "blocks" in Southern Rajasthan, over 300 villages in all. Each block now has a women's development unit as well as its eco-camps, and all are endeavouring to create a style of development that raises income level and basic educational, nutritional and welfare standards for the poorest of the poor without raising expectations that these desires can be better fulfilled by migration to the cities.


The second part of this article, which includes Martin's visit to Bhopal, will follow next month.

WATCHING FOR CRUISE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

So I go out without a calculation of what I can achieve, or of what the whole effort spread over a long period of time can achieve - I can't calculate that, and it's not important to my reasons for acting. I go out because I can't turn over on my bed and go back to sleep with this going on. Whether I can be effective, or whether enough people will join me, I don't know, but I go out there regardless. That convoy when it went to Longmoor years

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St Nectans, Welcome, Bideford, N. DEVON.

ago drove under my daughter's bedroom window: she woke up in the night screaming, "What was it? What's going on?" I can't just forget that and go back to sleep and pretend it's not happening. I have to recognise that it's happening on my doorstep and I have a responsibility to try to do something about it. And perhaps going out there without knowing what I can achieve, not being certain whether I can make a difference, in this very honest way, means that I can communicate with the other men out there, the men in uniform. And there have been quite a few occasions when that happens, and it's such a magical and heartening thing to be able to get to the real person inside the police uniform or the real squaddie, and see them in their confusion and their unhappiness for just a moment - it means that they have to see us as real ordinary people, not as stereotypes, and admit their own unhappiness with what's going on. And there is in fact in the police force a deep unease, and even amongst the military police guarding the convoy, a deep unhappiness and a sense of having been conned. Nobody told them it was going to be about these things, not many of these policemen when they signed up thought that they were going to be guarding American first-strike weapons against a couple of pacifists - and even though they will arrest you when they need to and sometimes take quite a bit of satisfaction in doing it very roughly, it still touches them deeply.

And that's what Cruisewatch is about, it's about touching people deeply. •

• Contact addresses: _____
Cruisewatch: PO Box 28, Newbury, Berks, RG14 7QZ. Cruise Resistance: c/o CND Office, 61 Bloom Street, Manchester M1 3LY. For comprehensive Cruisewatch and Greenham news, subscribe to 'Southern Resister', 2 Portland Square, Liss, Hants GU33 7LD.



"We have orders not even to acknowledge your existence." These extraordinary words were uttered in court by a USAF witness when referring to IAN LEE and fellow Cruisewatchers during Ian's trial at Devizes on February 16. Ian managed to overcome the handicap of his apparent non-existence and won the case, arguing that he had a 'lawful excuse' in damaging five cruise missile support vehicles on Salisbury Plain last September. In an exclusive interview with Green Line, Ian Lee talked to Barry Maycock about Cruisewatch, its beginnings and its philosophy, and about his own personal views and experiences. He began by talking about what Cruisewatch actually is, and how it works.

WATCHING *for* CRUISE

AS SOON as you have a name, people think there is an organisation with thick black lines round it, but it's not really like that. Cruisewatch is just the sum of the activities of the people who care to get involved in doing something about the Cruise convoys when they've left Greenham for one of their regular, usually monthly, practices in genocide on Salisbury Plain. There is no organisation - there is a sort of communications network, an alerting network which spreads out like a spider's web from Newbury, initiated by women around Newbury, and involving everybody who wants to get on the telephone trees. It's a network which allows spontaneous actions to happen, spontaneous and autonomous actions - and that's what really makes it beautiful, because it lets people come through in their own way, lets people contribute their own individuality to it. This is also why it's very hard for the authorities to counter, because it's like a wraith - as soon as you try to get hold of it, it disappears and turns up somewhere else - it's like people's spirit, you can't pin it down but it's incredibly powerful, and that intangibility is its great strength.

Having said that, we do have some guidelines, but they're not written down, or policed - in a sense it's just an understanding that builds up, expectations which you can reasonably have of people - and obviously the first of these is to do with nonviolence; if any of us get a sense of new people coming in who are not nonviolent or have difficulty with their anger, then there's a concern. It doesn't mean we exclude these people, it's just that we give special attention to coping with it. Most of us recognize that we have disowned our anger in the past, and what we've got to do in the end is to find a way of using that anger and that energy in a way that is nonviolent. The great achievement is that we are finding ways of doing that, and carrying out actions that are incredibly powerful.

Cruisewatch really started because enough people decided that they were not going to be defeated just because the government were telling them they were defeated. I can remember the response to Cruise actually being flown into Greenham - so many women came back and said how distraught they had been at the time and were for weeks afterwards. Soon there were a lot of vicious little articles appearing in the newspapers which had obviously been planted by the government, saying things like: "Is the peace movement dead?" There was this idea that it would become a self-fulfilling prophecy, that we would believe it. And then in February it was leaked in Jane's Defence Weekly that someone in the Pentagon had said: "Our first objective was to force Cruise into Britain. Our objective now is to render Cruise an accepted and unremarkable feature of life in England." It was said with such cunning, such manipulation, such contempt, that people said: "Over my dead body." And when the first convoys came out in, I think, March of that year, we phoned up the press and said: "Cruise is out of Greenham. Is this the real thing? How often will this happen?" Of course the press dithered and phoned the MOD who said: "This is just a routine, off-base exercise." And you could see people getting mad and saying: "We're not taking this." They wanted everyone to feel defeated and so powerless as to turn a blind eye. It didn't need a mass movement, it just needed a few people not to turn a blind eye, to publicise it, and to blow the cover on Cruise and their dirty little secret. So people came together with a sense of strength, groups of people from different places in the south of England, from small towns and villages in quite conservative areas, quite affluent areas, perhaps with no great political consciousness in a sense, no great levels of unemployment, no sense of the hard reality that had hit the north and the cities - this was our version of the hard reality.

◦ More overleaf

So it became laughable for the bureaucrats at the top of CND to talk about "single-issue campaigns" - in other words, we've got to have a bash at something else now and hope we're a bit more lucky. Because people were making the connections, and realising that all the issues were interconnected; that Cruise and other nuclear missiles have been tested in the Pacific, where there has in effect been a nuclear war spread out over four decades, to the point where five or six Pacific islands no longer exist. And there was the connection with anti-apartheid. Why on earth does the West turn a blind eye to South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia? Of course it's because we want the uranium for our missiles. And who happens to mine that uranium in a way which shortens their lives, and ruins their health? It just happens to be poor black people. People made the connections between all these issues.

Biggest of all these realisations was to do with feminism - that there is something specifically male about all these forms of oppression, and all forms of 'power-over'. Cruise and nuclear weapons are not an aberration, they're merely the worst symptoms of a masculinist society which thrives on competition, inequality and hierarchy. So people realised that it is not enough simply to oppose evil 'out there' - we have also to work on ourselves as products of this disastrous culture.

What we were doing was not something selfish, something that was happening to us in the south of England - we accepted that we were part of a world-wide struggle for peace and justice. What we were doing was just taking responsibility for the time and place we were in and acting accordingly. And people had a great compulsion to act - not to sit in meetings and talk, and write yet more letters - and that was what the authorities were most scared about. They were scared shitless of a few people standing at a roundabout and seeing Cruise go past and saying to the press: It took this route, and now it's at grid reference such-and-such; because that blew the whole pretence, the whole illusion, and that's why they were so afraid of what we were doing and why they continue to be afraid.

So we are the dragon, the convoy is St George, and St George is getting a trouncing this time round! But the main purpose of Cruisewatch is to show that secrecy is impossible because one or two people have decided to deny that secrecy - because that secrecy involves compliance, and no way are we going to comply with a convoy which is about genocide. So our main purpose was to be there when it came out, to track it where it went, to point out its launch-site, and to tell the world; and if we did that, then Cruise's rationale would be blown sky-high, and that's what we've managed to do over the past three

We can stop Cruise in its tracks for hours on end

years. There's not one convoy that has got away from us no matter what they've tried, no matter how many police they've had along, no matter what time of day they've brought it out, and that must mean for them a considerable series of defeats. And we can show that on some occasions we can achieve even more, on some occasions we can stop it in its tracks for hours on end, immobilise it quite nonviolently, and quite safely, and that's a kind of demonstration of what we can do. In fact the big stoppage last November, when it was immobilised for an hour and a half, was reported as if it was a one-off event; in fact almost every convoy is stopped at some point, if for a shorter time; in fact it's so commonplace that the media don't report it any more. But it's easy to stop, it is really very vulnerable, and we demonstrate its absurdity, its vulnerability. We show them that no matter what they have in the way of military guards, and however many police they have around it, it



is still vulnerable to people who go along with nothing more than their bare hands and courage and determination, and that causes them untold problems. It makes the convoy unpoliceable.

Interestingly, the way the media treats us has changed radically over the last couple of years. We used to be treated as if we were complete lunatics. When we phoned up the press and told them something, they would react as if we were inveterate liars and not believe a word until the MOD had confirmed it. That has been very discouraging. But by persisting with it and not giving up we've now got to the position which is almost the reverse. Cruisewatch is quoted as being a reliable, authoritative source of information which the media can't get anywhere else - and the MOD is treated as a source from which you expect evasions, half-truths, and great omissions. That has particularly been the case in the last six months, where at the same time as the MOD were denying that the convoy had been stopped last November we were giving a video of that action to the television stations. It happened again in January of this year when a convoy of British nuclear warheads crashed a few miles from where there was a Cruise convoy, and Cruisewatchers drove through blizzards and snowstorms to get very close to it. It was our presence which prevented the MOD's version of events (which was that a lorry had crashed, and that was all) from being accepted as the truth. It was we who actually took reporters and film crews and led them across snow-covered fields and down by hedges past the armed cordon so they could photograph what it was, and work out that it was a Mammoth Major carrying unstable nuclear warheads. The media has come to realise, through a whole series of events like that, that we are honest reliable people, and that we don't claim to know what we don't know, but that when we say we know something we are probably right, and that it's probably something highly embarrassing to the authorities. So again, that seems to be an example of not giving up, having the courage of convictions and carrying on, and gradually people come round to respect you for it even if they don't agree.

So in a sense the government has great control of the media in a mechanistic way. But the hearts and minds of the men and women at the sharp end of the media are more and more with us now: and though we become more and more exhausted, this persistence in the face of great odds is paying off in many, many ways - we're actually unpicking the military structure of obedience: squaddies, MOD police, civilian police as well, have started to recognise us as ordinary decent human beings with a reasonable point of view, so they don't quite believe it when their superior officers say that we are a danger to the state, potential terrorists; as soon as they start questioning their orders the whole fragile hierarchical structure of military life starts to collapse like a house of cards; in the same way with the media we're actually getting through to people and winning their hearts and minds, and that comes over in the flavour of the reports we receive.

One of the other good things that has happened is the way in which Greenham as a women-only space, as a women's initiative, has managed to overlap and work well for the most part with Cruisewatch, which is a mixed group. Cruisewatch really started as a sort of mixed support group to Greenham where some of the women, when Cruise started coming out of Greenham, asked that anybody, mixed groups, could come and do what they could, as long as it was away from Greenham. So we see ourselves as being supportive of Greenham - and Greenham and what it means is still at the heart of

CRUISEWATCH

Cruisewatch. It's interesting that within Cruisewatch we still work in a way that has learnt a lot from Greenham. The people who do most of the actions, take most of the initiatives in Cruisewatch are generally women, and very often in women-only actions, with women working together, and it tends to be the men in Cruisewatch who play supportive or facilitating roles. They are men who don't easily fit in, who don't easily take orders, and that's why they're in Cruisewatch rather than in their local peace group. We are discovering things about ourselves - it's often painful, but what is good is that, as well as doing the outer work of stopping Cruise, whether we like it or not this inner work is being done as well. It's a source of great hope for me.

Greenham and what it means is still at the heart of Cruisewatch

And it upsets me when people caricature Cruisewatch as being all about heroics, stopping Cruise convoys - daring boys' games - it's not about that: in fact there's so much care and concern taken that we do not get into a competitive mens' game, competing with the men in the big launchers and trying to outwit them. Everybody recognises that that's a danger and that it could happen, and I'm just so careful that it shouldn't happen. In fact we're very critical ourselves, and after every convoy we have a meeting where we get together, not to plan what will happen in the future but reflect on what happened during the last convoy - partly on what the police did, what the military did, what the USAF did, and we'll learn lessons for next time - but also to see how we acted, so that we can learn lessons about ourselves.

Personally I have become very irritated with peace campaigning which seems to spend most of its time at meetings where one peace campaigner talks to another peace campaigner about what they might possibly do in the future. Cruisewatch and other forms of direct action appeal to a different sort of people who are not attracted by more conventional, more indirect forms of campaigning. Many people in Cruisewatch are not National CND members, because they see nothing substantial to be gained by it - national CND, or central CND, is a hierarchical organisation which makes efforts at being democratic, but it's an ineffective way of working, because it's deliberately at several removes from the problem, and people who are the most powerful in that organisation are not doing things in their own right, they're organising other people to do them. Well, we know where that way of doing things has got us, it's got us into the situation the world is in now; and you don't get to grips with the reality about the way things are in the world at this moment. We have to accept that as individuals we are placed in this time and in this place and act according to what's around us. And I know I would feel it wrong to go off and join in someone else's struggle somewhere else in the world when I've been given part of that struggle here - though that struggle elsewhere might seem to be more glamorous or have a funny sort of appeal - I have to take what is given.

Some of the most moving experiences in Cruisewatch for me have been walking over Salisbury Plain at night across the closed military danger area, trespassing, looking for the Cruise convoy, getting lost, eventually finding it in a copse or wood surrounded by barbed wire, with British paratroopers patrolling the barbed wire; and not going any further, just walking out of the blackness up to the

paratroopers - who react with "I'll have to kill him first." And then there's that initial moment of potential violence which you've got to defuse, you've got to be very steady so he knows he's not going to be attacked. Then you get complete openness: "What the hell are you doing here? Why do you do it? You must be mad!" And real honesty happens then, in the darkness when you can't see the other man's face and he can't see your face and you'll never recognise each other again. It's so nice to be in a real situation authentically, and get real communication, because I feel I've made a drop of difference to that man's conscience. I've added courage to his conscience because he's seen someone else bare his conscience. And I know many other people in Cruisewatch have had similar experiences and said the same things.

Other good moments work in a special way. For example, when the convoy is about to leave Salisbury Plain and we are in our cars with CB radios at all the points where it might come off and at other junctions as well, and a decoy convoy of police vehicles assembles at one point and drives off, and a cruisewatcher reports it, the usual reaction is that this is the place where it's about to come out - but in the air you sense a suspicion, it's telepathic, and nobody knows what it is; nobody says, "They're not the right vehicles," but everyone senses it's wrong, so nobody rushes round and gets trapped at a roadblock (which is what they intend to happen) while it comes off somewhere else. Everyone stays back, and twenty minutes later it does come out somewhere else. Those are the special moments when we trust ourselves enough to work in these special ways which we haven't really got names for - it all sounds mystical perhaps, but that's the way it really is, and it's really what confounds the military. They try to play many tricks, but they generally don't come off.

One of the other good moments I had recently was when I was on Salisbury Plain illegally and the convoy was about to come out, like a monster breaking out of its lair, and I was there in order to check the direction it was going to come. On the CB radio I could hear people all round the Plain very calmly reporting what was happening and covering every exit and every high point, watching lights, watching movement - and that gave me a feeling of what it must be like to be an American Cruise operator, or an MoD policeman, and they must feel absolutely daunted by it, because people were calm, very restrained, very courageous - and the military were completely besieged, besieged in a nonviolent, nonmilitary way, very effectively besieged, and they weren't being allowed to get away with it.

I've added courage to his conscience

One of the most beautiful experiences is realising how welcoming and safe the night is, how safe Salisbury Plain is. People regard it as being bleak, a wasteland, the military presence a frightening one, a dangerous one. Once you get over these preconceptions and actually go walking there in the darkness, making sure not to go into any of the impact zones where there might be exploding shells, it really is a wonderful place, extraordinarily beautiful. One of my most powerful experiences was waiting for the convoy till dawn, not finding it, but in the process of waiting around I became so attuned to the Plain around me as dawn came, just lying back on the grass seeing all the animals running round and the dawn coming up - an absolutely magical experience. When things like that happen, it makes you realise that we're connecting with what the Plain used to be: those experiences are always available and are one of the sources of strength to me. And Cruisewatch isn't a burden in any way and it isn't a sacrifice; in fact it's an opportunity, because we're putting ourselves in the way of extraordinary experiences. So what if some of them are tough or arduous: everything new is like that, but it's clearly leading somewhere, only we don't know where.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

BARRY MAYCOCK took part in a Mens' Liberation Weekend at Monkton Wylde earlier this year.

Man to Man

NEW WAYS OF
BEING TOGETHER

MEN AT MONKTON WYLDE

SOMEONE REFERRED to this as the "first ever open mens' liberation weekend", and I must admit to feeling flurries of nerves as I travelled down to Dorset, to beautiful Monkton Wylde, not knowing quite what to expect. In the event the whole weekend exceeded all my expectations as we explored new ways of being together as men, rejecting from the depths of our hearts the accepted notions of maleness that help to reinforce male power and male violence. The weekend worked because we all felt committed to this common vision, and also committed to each other – as soon as we got together in the large group I experienced a great sense of trust and safety, which temporarily at least shut out the very "unsafe" world outside.

The amazing men from Bristol MOVE (Men Overcoming Violence) helped us gently along, guiding us into expressing our innermost feelings, our fears and hurts, encouraging us to make contact with each other, by listening, by eye contact, by touch. There was in fact much hugging and touching, and tender feelings spread round the circle as we held hands. For this was not the place (and this was repeatedly stressed) for intellectual discussion or theory – there was enough time for ideas, and chat, at mealtimes and other occasions: the weekend was all about feelings, getting in touch with our emotions, and how we felt as men – the good things we felt about ourselves, the bad things, and the things about us we never wanted said again! The key to unlock a lot of problems and buried feelings was not only the sense of trust in a safe men-only space, but also the loving attention we gave to each other – so absorbed did we become in our attentive listening that when it came to our own turn to speak there was no pre-rehearsed set of words in our heads: what we expressed came from our hearts, and included hesitations and silences, and we gave each other gentle permission for all the free flow of emotions.

For me the most valuable work was done in the small groups, with about four of us, including someone more experienced to help us; there was a lot of crying, a lot of noisy sessions – perhaps sound-proofed rooms would have been a good idea! In this way we were able to carry out a healing process, because our anger, our tears, much natural spontaneity of feeling, has been driven out of us (sometimes beaten out of us) from a very early age by our conditioning, the expectations society has of us as men. The world of men is in general a cold place, hard and competitive, and we run for warmth and emotional support to women, and only then (except in certain special circumstances) only in permitted heterosexual relationships. This puts great pressure on women, on sex, on relationships, which is difficult for them to bear, and stressful. Very often what we are seeking so desperately is simply the lost side of ourselves. We showed at Monkton Wylde that men can become true allies of each other, rather than rivals or competitors, and this will help us become true allies of women in their own struggle.

We were allotted (or we chose) a particular partner to whom we gave special support, whom we sought out and listened to, and gave particular attention to. I'd like to thank Steve, fellow peace campaigner, for taking special

care of me! There was also lots of free time – on Saturday night we entertained each other with games, stories, poetry, circle-dancing – and in the afternoon three of us went for a walk to the sea and arrived back late for the evening session, not long after we had all been urged to be as punctual as possible! What was particularly moving was the way gay men, bisexual men, heterosexual men could talk openly about their sexuality and give each other total loving support, exchange kisses and hugs – it must have been the most gently subversive weekend I've ever been on! It was interesting too to discover how similar our experiences were, how our true selves had been suppressed or distorted by a patriarchal system that is supposed to benefit us.

It was interesting also that a significant number of men had suffered sexual abuse at some time in their lives, and from my own experience I have to conclude that this is more widespread and commonplace than men will admit. A lot of research and writing needs to be done on this topic, and mens' groups are a good place in which this can be discussed, safely and with complete confidentiality.

In the end we spoke of our visions and dreams, our hopes for the future. We all felt we had learned so much, and wanted to take what we had learned back into the cold real world beyond Monkton Wylde, as well as good memories and feelings. Some of us had quite elaborate visions – all I could think of was that I would like to do lots of circle-dancing in the future! There were so many things to remember – the beauty of that place, the good vegan food and home-made bread, the games that were usually a complete shambles, the shining eager faces of the men, the atmosphere of love and trust. And I want to thank Steve and Ian and the men from Bristol that made it all possible. Something of the spirit of that weekend remains with me, and I was particularly moved by the words that one of the men spoke in that final session: "Above all I dream of and live for a time in which there is no oppression anywhere in the world."

M.O.V.E. – Men Overcoming Violence

THE PROJECT offers a counselling service for men who have a problem with their violent behaviour or feelings. We are aware that men who have violent tendencies are made very unhappy by their violence, both directly because it is hurtful to us to hurt another human being, and also indirectly, in dealing with the consequences of that violence. It is important to state that the project is not intended to 'rescue' the victims of violence, although obviously the changes that take place in their lives are an added bonus. We are concerned with the men themselves and in helping them to live their lives to the utmost.

First and foremost our goal is to help men to live their lives without violence because it is in their own interest.

We have also started to offer a counselling service to men who sexually abuse or have desires to sexually abuse children. There have proved to be a number of interesting parallels with our work in dealing with violence.

Built into the current thinking of the project is the idea of growth. This shows itself in the way that we take clients and in the relationship between clients and counsellors, and also in the relationships that we have with the outside world. Already there are other groups starting who have been inspired by the work that we do, and have learnt about the way in which we work at the open workshops we offer.

In the long term we hope to be part of an affiliated network of similar organisations offering counselling around violence and child sexual abuse. We hope to make a significant contribution to world peace.

If you feel we could be of assistance to you, or if you are just interested in the way in which M.O.V.E. works, do please feel free to contact us on 0272 710783.

never We asked for it!

MEN AS TOOLS AND VICTIMS OF REPRESSION

WOMEN HAVE in recent years spoken out with great courage and honesty about their oppression, their experience of rape and sexual abuse; incest survivors have added their voices. Rape has been redefined, not as the aberrant behaviour of a few violent men, but as a 'conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear'. Yet we as men have rarely spoken out about the sexual abuse of men by other men, nor have we come to terms with our hurt and suffering in an area of experience that is still neglected. The rape of a man does not exist in law, if rape is defined as vaginal penetration; but it is also an experience which is dismissed and unacknowledged by victims and attackers alike, locked in a sense within a strange complicity. Feelings of shame and guilt, a sense of powerlessness, of cowardice for not reacting and fighting back, help to reinforce the silence.

There are exceptions to this: prison rape, particularly with reference to men convicted of crimes of violence, has been the subject of special study as an essential factor in power struggles within an all-male, authoritarian environment. Rape is about power, and the man who seeks power seeks sex too, as the principal means by which his hard-won status can be expressed; it involves conquest and degradation, and has nothing to do with sexual release, though the myth still persists that these events take place because men are deprived of normal heterosexual contact. A man who rapes in prison does not consider himself a homosexual, or to have engaged in homosexual acts - indeed homosexual men are often early victims, along with passive, sensitive men who do not wish to fight.

Life in prison, as in other enclosed all-male institutions, could be considered an extreme situation, and rape regarded as the product of that situation rather than part of a wider pattern of sexual abuse. And the tendency to concentrate on the more extreme cases, violent rape for example, tends to obscure the fact that continuous sexual harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and other petty humiliations can be just as damaging as an isolated, sudden attack.

My own experience in certain all-male environments, at school for example, and at work, have convinced me that this problem is more pervasive than we are prepared to admit. Factory life for me was a pale echo of what must happen in certain prisons, with some men seeking power over others by acts of intimidation, usually expressed in terms of sexual abuse. The sexual organs, for example, would be attacked, our 'masculinity' thereby challenged, in a world in which 'maleness' equals 'power'. To be accepted, and prove our 'manhood', we had to be able to receive violence unflinchingly, and were encouraged to give it out in turn. None of us spoke out, nor did we find such things unexpected; fear and shame sometimes played a part, yet such power games usually go unremarked, put aside and unacknowledged, for an obvious reason - because they are part of something we have been subjected to all our lives.

In the end 'maleness' becomes a matter of giving and receiving violence, of becoming desensitized both to the harm we do and the hurt that is done to us. So while we are utterly spoilt as boys, because maleness is overvalued in a patriarchal system, we are at the same time viciously hurt. Are we able to heal each other, without depending on women to soothe us and make us feel better? Do we enjoy our power and privilege so much that we are prepared to overlook the cost, the harm to

our true selves, our wholeness as human beings? When will we speak out about our own 'oppression'? Men, of course, have always spoken out and acted, with great courage, against cruelty, the violence of our world, our 'inhumanity' - yet we have done so while seeking to retain our personal edifice of male power intact. 'Power' is challenged, but not 'male power' - and some of the great artists, writers, campaigners against tyranny have themselves been petty domestic tyrants. Unless we look honestly at ourselves and seek to change, we will reproduce, in our campaigns against oppression, the same old patterns of oppressive behaviour.

I have only just begun to acknowledge how deeply I have been wounded, how wrong are the things done to us, how utterly wrong patriarchy feels for me too, and I'm sure for many other men. But we will not be able to help bring down this edifice of male power if we are crippled by guilt; or if we simply use 'therapy', in mens' groups and elsewhere, in order to feel better about our own sexism, or as a means of making heterosexual relationships work - so that we can continue to enjoy what we feel women have to offer! We can begin by a new kind of celebration, and reclaim our tenderness, our sensitivity, our care for others, along with our capacity for courage, strength, creative energy - and we must begin with a personal decision - a commitment to seek an end to patriarchy and all its works.

B.DENNIS

N.B. I have written this piece pseudonymously because I would like to get in touch with other men who have themselves suffered sexual abuse, so that we can talk about our experiences and help each other. Full confidentiality will be respected, and anonymity if desired - please contact me c/o Green Line, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HZ.

MENS' GROUPS AND MENS' LIBERATION

Forming mens' groups - no problem with this - just meet together and start one up! It's strange how important it soon becomes. Lots of ideas for group work are contained in 'In Our Own Hands: A Book of Self-Help Therapy' by Shella Ernst and Lucy Goodson. Though written by women for women-only groups, I've found it full of useful ideas for men-only groups as well.

Useful contacts and information:

M.A.N. (Men's Antisexist Newsletter) c/o 60 Rhymer Street, Cathays, Cardiff. Contributions are received from different groups at various times - It comes out irregularly, which is its biggest drawback for those seeking continuity of contact and debate. It lists events, activities, contact numbers, and provides lots of useful information.

ACHILLES' HEEL: Details from 79 Pembroke Road, London E17: 015214764.

SEXCHANGE: New antisexist magazine produced by women and men from Oxford University; contact John Garth, St Anne's College. DIARY FOR MEN: a group of men in London are aiming to produce a Mens' Diary for 1988; any men wishing to join the group or to send information, please get in touch with Chris Hastie, 47 Dunsmore Road, London N16.

Also: a short newsletter of interest to men opposing sexism will come out, if possible, every 8 weeks or so, providing the continuity lacking at the moment in the mens' movement. Please contact Chris Bristow, 106 Welstead Avenue, Aspley, Nottingham, NG8 5NS (0602) 760550.

BRISTOL M.O.V.E. 1 Mark Lane, Bristol, BS1 4XR, Bristol 710763.

Future workshops: 31st May: Men and Work (men only); 21st June: Men and Violence (men only). Contact Tim on 0272 542357.

MANCHESTER M.O.V.E.: Pete Zanzoterra, 111 John Nash Crescent, Hulme, M15 5DU. (226.0066).

M.M.A.S. (Manchester Men Against Sexism) P.O. Box 25, South Manchester, PDO, M14 6ND.

OXFORD M.O.V.E. Contact Bill (244371), Barry (53351).

BIRMINGHAM Men Against Sexism: 54 Alison Street, Digbeth. (Birmingham MOVE Workshop: Saturday June 6th - contact Bob on 523.6929).

National Creche Group: Mark Long, 60 Blantyne Road, Liverpool. Terence Higgins Trust: 01.833.2971 (for advice about AIDS).

Useful books: 'Against Our Will' by Susan Brownmiller, contains a chapter on 'Power, Institution, and Authority' which discusses prison rape. 'Women, Men, and Rape' by Ray Wyre, focusses on the men who rape, and is primarily addressed to other men. There is also an article (unusual for a national newspaper) called 'Male Rape: Anguish of the Forgotten Victims' by Celia Hadden, which appeared last month in the 'Independent'. Copies are available from 'Green Line'. If anyone wishes to contribute to research into this topic, contact Drs. Mezey and King, Institute of Psychiatry, Denmark Hill, London, SE5 8AF.



PR - our best chance

I agree with Chris Simpson and Ian Smith (GLSD) that the Additional Member System (AMS), which brings parties up to a strength proportional to their popular vote, would be a great improvement on the present British system, and is probably the best of the systems actually in use. Even with the 5% barrier it has enabled the West German Greens to establish themselves as a political force to be reckoned with.

We should recognise, however, that those who framed the West German constitution did not anticipate the growth of the green movement. If they had, they would have avoided designing a system which allows a mere 5% of the vote to propel a genuinely radical alternative party into the legislature. And that is why, as I am sure Simpson and Smith would agree, the existing British political establishment will go to any lengths to prevent the adoption of AMS for elections to the House of Commons. They do not like what they see happening in West Germany, and they don't want it to happen in Britain. For us, that means a choice between STV (Single Transferable Vote) and the status quo. There is little to be gained by refusing to consider anything but the AMS; even that is not an ideal system, and half a loaf would be an improvement on no bread.

The British 'first past the post' system is about as unsatisfactory way of choosing a legislature and government as could be devised. As for its much vaunted 'constituency link', well, for someone like myself with eco-socialist beliefs, living in a solidly working class area of London, what link could possibly exist between me, or any of my neighbours, and the rapacious neo-fascist Rachmanite landlord who 'represents' me at Westminster? I would not go near such scum, let alone consult him about my civic problems. Conversely, if I were an MP, a constituent who was concerned that Britain should retain nuclear weapons, or reintroduce capital punishment, would obtain little assistance from me. In practice few people attend MPs' surgeries: those who do are mostly regulars. (This is not to decry the hard work that many MPs of various parties put in on behalf of constituents.)

If the 'local connection' is deemed to be desirable, the experience of the Republic of Ireland shows that with STV (Single Transferable Vote in Multi-Member Constituencies), communication between constituents and TDs (MPs) is much easier and much more frequent. This may be due to some extent to the small population of the country (3m), its parochial atmosphere, and constituencies of manageable size; but the 3 to 5 members constituencies are not that much smaller than the British average. Contacts are greater because there is more chance of a constituent finding a sympathetic ear when there are 3, 4 or 5 pairs of ears to choose from. The disadvantage of the greater geographical spread of the constituency is substantially outweighed by the greater range of options provided by the STV system.

Admittedly the system hasn't worked miracles in Ireland yet, but this should not be blamed on the STV system itself: it is attributable to the deeply rooted conservative and ecclesiocratic tendencies of both major parties, and to the lack of any strong radical tradition other than opposition to British rule. Now the latter has gone from two thirds of the island, such

opposition is no longer the rallying point it once was.

I think STV (Single Transferable Vote) is worth a try in England (Wales and Scotland I expect to go their own way). It will be a great improvement on the present mess, there is a reasonable chance of getting it adopted, and its adoption will not preclude a better system at some future date, perhaps when that fatuous gentlemen's club now squatting in the other House of Parliament is finally evicted. I honestly believe that in England it provides the best chance we have of getting Green representatives into the legislature, where they belong, in the near future.

Hugh Roper
London.

Victory for Real Greens!

Congratulations to David Pepper and his long-suffering greens within the Labour Party. They have achieved much; socialists are now unilateralist and opposed to nuclear power.

Our sympathies to them for the Parliamentary Labour Party they are saddled with - while Cunningham is shadow Environment Minister, and Kinnock negotiates on Cruise, Labour still has a long way to go. It is for this reason that we hesitate before we put our precious X on the ballot form.

Will a Labour government really solve the problems of wealth and power redistribution, as David Pepper so clearly believes? Or will their plans for continuing industrial growth in fact perpetuate the imbalances of the present and worsen resource depletion, Third World exploitation and international tensions? By voting Labour, will I not be supporting first-strike NATO, and escalation in conventional weaponry resulting in an increased arms trade?

No Mr Pepper, the electorate is smarter than you or many ideologues will credit. Green voters understand that power seeking politicians respond only to the ballot box. Many greens have tried applying pressure within other parties, only to get squeezed themselves. Others have no faith left in the willingness or ability of conventional politicians to change anything at all.

So we became REAL GREENS - not willing to compensate and fudge. We use tactics those in power understand to focus their minds on the need for real change. We take "their" votes.

So far they have responded by donning greenish clothes. A large measure of our success is their increasingly desperate attempts to attract the "green voter". We will keep up the pressure until they finally reject short term botches and face the repercussions of their policies. Then they won't need to resort to any calculating, cynical attempts like Greens for a Labour Victory!

Niki Kortvelyessy
(Green Party PPC for Chelsea)
3D Kempsford Gardens
London SW5 9LH

**PLEASE
KEEP LETTERS
SHORT!**

Danger: Government at work

Which part of the Fourth World has John Papworth been inhabiting since the Second World War that he hasn't noticed the contribution of government to the destruction of the British Rail network?

He gives us as his "for example" "the values which make mass motoring acceptable do not come from the political arena at all".

It is government decisions which give tax relief on company cars, deregulate buses, and subsidise the road network while expecting the railways to pay their way. It was the Prime Minister herself who would use any other form of transport than the railways.

What is it that makes me more afraid of John's "localised community consensus ... deciding what is 'good' or 'bad'" than I am of the media megamachine (which I know how to deal with)? The knowledge that I'd probably be tarred and feathered and run out of the community for having two illegitimate daughters and insisting on the drug of my choice rather than the ones the rest of the community finds acceptable.

I live in a living community, a community that spans the globe, where I can explore myself, my "real needs" etc. I also live in an urban community where it's often difficult to rush to the bank or post office before it shuts because I meet so many friends and acquaintances who want to stop and chat. But obviously I'm luckier than John Papworth in this respect.

As to John's voter who does not decide the policy issues - when she's Mary Whitehouse or Olga Maitland, she certainly does. The fact that we may not agree with those values does not affect the fact that individuals do decide values in this society from time to time. John deserves credit where credit is due for not being prepared to use the mass media to his own ends; but unfortunately his and the Green party's ends can only be achieved, in time, by becoming the norm, the fashion - i.e. by hijacking the mass media onto our side.

New technologies have not been controlled "at the top" of the megamachine, a consensus of materialism has been worsened in the UK by the failure of the Labour Party, when in power, to bring in proportional representation; and globally, by a combination of Science, Imperialism and Christianity failing to see that the world is a finite, living ecosystem upon which we depend.

Linda Hendry
2a West Preston Street
Edinburgh EH8 9PX

Birth and death: the Sandoz connection

In February 1985 you published my article 'Birth Reclaimed' in which I tried to outline the massive global ecological problem medical interference in childbirth represents from the personal viewpoint of the mother; that is, the analogy between the rape of mother earth and the rape of women as mothers. I would like to update the story: of course, my eldest child Sarah died of cancer in October '88. Obvious, wasn't it?

Another point. Dear old syntometrine used in 100% of hospitalised British births for control of the third stage of labour: now, who makes that drug? Yes, you've guessed, Sandoz - only responsible for killing the whole of the Rhine last year in one fell swoop! Yet how do ecologists possibly get British women to boycott syntometrine en masse, when doctors, midwives and mothers really believe this drug is a life saver (so we use it in every case?). Many mothers do not even realise they have been given it.

In my view it is a carcinogen - leading to a dirty womb after birth that continues to bleed long after it should. Women are told by friendly doctors that 4 week periods after a baby are normal, yet in old-fashioned midwifery text books compiled before the

onset of universal syntometrine use in this country, the bleeding was observed to stop at 9 days post-partum; the midwife calls for 10 days because in theory by that day the womb is dry and the mother is not so susceptible to infection. Quaint midwives still keep to this tradition, unaware that many mothers are bleeding heavily long after their last visit. Oh well, it's only more sanitary towels to block up the sewage system, who cares!

Anyway, medicine has it all sewn up for mothers - baby at 20 years, hysterectomy at 40 years - womb cancer is not a problem unless women actually want to keep their wombs and few western women love themselves that much: that's the official medical attitude - you're better off without it!

Incidentally, Sandoz used to make LSD commercially too: blow the brains of one generation and the wombs of another! With proper physiological management of labour and the 3rd stage, syntometrine is unnecessary. British mothers don't need to pollute the Rhine in order to have babies successfully.

Mary Field
21 Mountview Road
Orpington, Kent BR6 0HN

No nuclear commitment

It was very interesting to read of this 'campaign' of five Labourites to convince Greens to vote for a Labour victory. They claim that if Labour forms the next government (very wishful thinking!), they will "phase out nuclear power". This is not so. The Labour Party Conference voted against phasing out nuclear power within the life of the next parliament. All Labour has is a vague statement to phase out nuclear power sometime in the future. Like other Labour policies, it can be changed or forgotten. People who put their trust in Labour have very short memories.

The reason why Labour, Liberal, SDP and Conservative parties cannot have a commitment to phasing out nuclear power within the next decade is that they all believe in industrial economic growth. You cannot have such growth without large amounts of easily available fuel. Labour would have to order large coal-fired power stations to replace the nuclear ones. Even if these stations were fitted with 'scrubbers' to stop the acid emissions, there would still be environmental damage.

GLV (Greens for a Labour Victory) have shown just how ungreen they are with the attack on Tim Brennan (letters, GL50) in which they refer to him coldly as 'Brennan' and tell us that we should act positively by voting against the Tories and support the present unfair and undemocratic electoral system - which Labour does very well out of!

As a former member of the Labour Party, I can tell GLV that the Labour Party will never change, and neither will its apologists. Every election it's the same old song, "Labour let us down last time, but this time they won't!" There is a lot more to green politics than meaningless vote-catching motions passed at conferences, and readers of GL should not be conned into supporting the Labour Party.

Ray Vail
(PPC, Exeter Green Party)
123 Fore Street, Exeter.

Lessons to avoid

Wot? No ideology? It really isn't that bad! The article in GL50 threw out a lot of red herrings (which no doubt have a lot in common with green herrings).

It is doctrine (a.k.a. ideology) which has led many varieties of socialism into a wasteful confrontational politics. Fragmentation of the left occurs over some item of doctrine. Left wing groups sometimes get addicted to conflict - between each other and with the 'class enemy'.

Yet the article damns the Green Party for

not identifying with the left and for not having an ideology. It is the holier-than-thou attitudes that come from left-wing sects, and their masculine tendency to 'love with a passion called hate,' that has given some greens an aversion to 'socialism'. Greens who have not been turned off by the hostilities between and from the socialist fragments are more ready to listen to socialists than the fragments are to listen to each other!

First, at the start of the Manifesto for a Sustainable Society, there is a (neglected) 'Philosophical Basis' (the polite name for ideology). It isn't a pure rigid dogma. But it does include a diagnosis of some symptoms and a minimum prescription for cure. In its own way it does take in questions of redistribution of wealth and ownership of industry.

Second, the article's assertion that Green Party policies would need a fascist one-party state to bring them in, is almost crazy. It is reminiscent of Churchill's warning in 1945 that Labour's schemes, such as for the welfare state, would need a gestapo to enforce them. Labour set up the health service; then, in 1951, Churchill was returned to power. But Churchill's government did not dismantle the NHS. This was because the NHS was backed by the support and understanding of the popular conscience. So radical, irreversible changes can be brought through democracy if the population is largely attuned to them.

The task of the green movement is to get its message across (as Jonathon Porritt suggested) in order to gather the consensus. To change the political culture we have to reach people. And people's political opinions are most open to change at election times. The Green Party exists to bring green politics into the conventional arena where most people expect politics to be played out: elections to all levels of government.

We should try to benefit from experience without becoming an institution of the radical fringe. The article criticises Greens for "perpetuating their own institutional identities rather than advancing the cause," but this is much more true of the Labour Party. Labour gives several lessons in what a radical party should avoid. From being a party campaigning for social transformation, Labour is now mostly a liberal institution for mild repairs; an election winning machine.

Or should we form a popular front? Support Greens for a Labour Victory (sic).

Matthew Sands
Flat 3, 227 Cromwell Road
Whitstable, Kent CT5 1LA

The other New Age

I've just picked up a copy of GL50 wherein I read with interest the article on Green Ideology by Jon Carpenter, and enjoyed it until I reached the bit on new age philosophy.

I have been involved with green-ness for years in varying aspects, being a member of the Eco/Green Party for several years. I have felt increasing unease with its 'secularity'; this is of course purely personal, but I feel tokenism to spiritual values is not enough. Jon Carpenter's views on the New Age movement were ill-informed and annoying. Yes, there is such a movement, mostly based on the Aquarian age concept of the '60s. It has degenerated into a business, yuppie style, its broad category being the Human Potential Resources Movement, most of which espouses 'self' orientated therapies, meditation, etc. All are based on some 'spiritual' or religious source; Buddhism, Taoism, Amerindian Shamanism, etc. Essentially, all or most are navel contemplating.

But another current exists, a positive eco-pagan movement concentrating on the native (British) traditions and spirituality. It involves energising the re-establishment of contact with the spirit of the land and cycles of the seasons and the elements. It recognises the abuses perpetrated by humankind on the fragility of the Earth and its creatures. This movement is active in ritual and revitalising our connection with

cycles of the seasons (yes, it is possible in cities too!). Groupings such as Pagans Against Nukes, Pagan Animal Rights, and Inner Keltig (and there are more) all work to undo these abuses.

A politics separated from the spiritual is doomed, and if this appears hippy or romantic or 'right-wing' to Jon Carpenter, then I'm afraid he is falling into traps he accuses others of, categorisation filed under Ignorance. I have information on the groups mentioned, and more.

David Grimbleby
Flat 3, 41 Oxford Road
Southport PR8 2EG

[Jon Carpenter writes: No need to attack me! I make exactly the same distinction as does David between the two kinds of new age movement he describes, and had absolutely no intention of criticising the pagan networks. As he suggests, "New Age" is becoming big business and very influential, and I can only suggest that pagans avoid using the words as they have probably been hi-jacked beyond recall!]

Narrow view of family life

Does Martin Ryle, in his article on 'Family Life' (GL50), realise how many 'family' situations he has failed to include in his male-supremacist view of a family "comprising, as its original basis, a woman and a man and their child or children"?

The nuclear family is a newcomer: before that we had extended families, whole villages as families. What right does he have to suggest we can "perhaps agree" to his narrow definition?

As a lesbian feminist contemplating a family with my lover, I feel deeply insulted by his article which smacks of the values being pushed by Thatcher & Co. We don't need to defend this narrow definition of the family - it's being pushed on us all the time as the only right way to bring up children. Lay off, Martin - if you're scared of 'other' types of family, why not say so (after all, we might replace the traditional male/female and one child model...) and stop harping on about "division of labour" within the families? Until you redefine and broaden your own definition of family, you can't even begin to tackle that issue.

Fionn Stevenson
5 De Vitre Street, Lancaster

Obstacles to Community Rent

Community Ground Rent or Land Tax (which it is) forms an important part of the Green Party platform. In its broad concept it seems an admirable tax, especially if provision is made for a personal allowance of land analogous to personal allowances in income tax. In the urban context it is clearly preferable to either the present property rating system, or the proposed flat rate poll tax. As applied to the countryside it could, if sensitively administered, be a powerful instrument for environmental protection.

But what of the inner cities? Inner city land values can be so high and the ground landlords so powerful that it may be quite difficult to collect a realistic land tax. It would mean a direct clash with the Duke of Westminster, the Church Commissioners and even the Crown, all of whom would lose the majority of their vast incomes. Such owners would certainly employ accountants and lawyers of the very highest skill who may well out-smart the civil service officers charged with collecting the tax.

I do hope that Green Party policy makers will allow for the tremendous legal obstacles that would be constructed by such interested parties against collection of land tax at anything like full rental value in inner city commercial areas.

Owen Dumpleton
36 Partridge Close, Washington B
Tyne and Wear NE38 0ES

• More overleaf



• Continued from previous page

Touching TOES

Penny Newsome's somewhat hostile review of 'The Living Economy' accuses the New Economics of being more friendly to capitalism than to socialism, and of being naive about power. There is some justice in both criticisms, but it's not the whole story.

She assembles quotes from every part of the book for evidence of the 'party line' that she believes TOES is pushing, and so has no problem in proving that TOES is in favour of such schemes as 'Universal Capital Ownership'. In fact the original TOES conferences were never intended to assemble a party line, but to debate ideas. Some of the participants invited to give papers turned out to be rather strange bedfellows. The publisher's blurb went over the top in talking of a "coherent, consistent framework". The book is in fact a very heterogeneous collection of ideas and should not be read as a green economics manifesto. That being said, the scarcity of contributions from a green socialist perspective is a sad and glaring omission.

The accusation of naivety about power is perhaps aimed at the wrong target. Economics is strictly speaking only about means to achieving certain given ends, those ends being defined in the province of politics. In practice, conventional economics has taken to defining the ends for the politician, as with the identification of growth with 'progress' and 'prosperity'. The New Economics has countered growthism with a different set of ends, and has so entered (rightly) the political arena. However, TOES is not a political party, and it may be unfair to criticise the New Economics for avoiding the issues raised in the confrontation of powerful vested interests.

Ms Newsome laments the absence of a "greenprint" and any reference to taxation. TOES is not in the business of manifestos, but the Green Party is. Their general election manifesto will contain much detail on how the tax system can help bring about a green economy, which could never be an "uncontrolled market economy".

The Basic Income Scheme and the redistribution of wealth are difficult matters. Briefly, Ms Newsome seems to believe that paying BIS through negative income tax would somehow be cheaper and more redistributive than as a cash payment. However the arithmetic is unfortunately the same in either case. The Green party has just voted for a Basic Income greater than present welfare benefits, perhaps £80 pw for single unemployed. This is mistaken in my view, for it means raising astronomical sums in extra taxation, maybe £70-£80bn (after existing tax reliefs and allowances and the DHSS budget has been subtracted). The Labour Party has realised the impossibility of achieving substantial redistribution only by taxing the highest incomes. To attempt to raise this much through income tax would need a new army of tax inspectors patrolling the 'informal' (i.e. black) economy. The Green Party's Community Rent, a tax on unearned income, is a redistributive measure well suited to an informal economy. However, it would not yield nearly enough to finance this new, improved 'Superbasic' Income. Clearly much thinking remains to be done.

David Kemball-Cook
9 Horsford Road
London SW2 5BW

Cracking the work ethic

Penny Newsome's article on 'Green Economics, Right and Wrong' (GL51) deserves the serious attention of all concerned with green economics, and with the need for such

a thing. It presents many valid criticisms. However, I am not very sure what alternatives, if any, she is proposing.

On a specific point: while she is right to criticise the Basic Income Scheme "as suggested by the Green Party (p228)" for its inadequate levels of payment, I am glad to report that the Green Party has accepted this. Its spring conference has given overwhelming support to the idea that it must be substantially more than present unemployment and welfare benefits, and this will be incorporated into its manifesto for the coming General Election. The '50% tax' is dropped, too; the scheme should be funded not from tax on employment, but from a range of taxes on unearned - undeserved! - income.

I must dispute Penny's contention that this scheme should be scrapped, since I see it as an essential tool in breaking away from the work ethic - that essential prop of capitalism - and evolving towards a more rational use of resources (including modern, labour-saving technology) efficiently and to meet people's real needs, without the obscene wastefulness of the present competitive society; to break free from the yoke of the present 'economy' - which, however difficult and dangerous a task, is essential if we are ever to reach our green goals and not be pushed into the abyss into which capitalism is driving us.

May I cordially invite Penny to join in the debate within the Green Party's economics working group, which is trying to tackle these problems?

Brian Leslie
12 Queens Road
Tunbridge Wells TN4 9LU

Redistributing wealth

Richard Hunt (GL49) asks 'How Will Greens Redistribute Wealth?' and claims that this problem must be at the top of any worthwhile political agenda. He then goes on to savage Green Party taxation and other policies for not living up to his notions of how things should be. All of which is a bit silly, since Richard does not say either why or how wealth should be redistributed.

Given that the aim of being green is to ensure a sustainable and worthwhile lifestyle for all creatures, then what we want to create and equitably redistribute is 'real' wealth, which we can define to include health, happiness, good companionship, etc. Real wealth is not the same as material wealth, and greens above all should not make the confusion.

The ownership of resources is another red herring. The land could be owned by one, some, all or none, and yet still be used wisely or stupidly. The issue is in land use. As long as land is used wisely, there is hope for us all. There is no reason why landowners should use their land wisely simply because they own that land - indeed many don't. All we need are vigorously enforced wise laws which apply regardless of who owns the land.

Finally, Richard seems to assume that Comparative Advantage is the only reason for trade. That is not so. I may be a better author and gardener than someone I employ to do my garden; yet I will (in theory) employ her because I can earn more in an hour spent writing than I would save by doing my own garden for that hour. That is Absolute Advantage and explains why the USA trades with the world. The point is that trade raises everyone's standard of living unless it's interfered with negatively - which is usually what happens, and which is why some countries remain poorer than others over time.

The challenge for green economics is to create and equitably redistribute REAL WEALTH. A neurotic obsession with land ownership and a blanket decrying of civilisation just unhelpfully wastes time, which we all agree is fast running out.

Tim Flinn
12 Menzieshill Road
Dundee

NEWS IN BRIEF

CAPITAL TRANSPORT

Friends of the Earth have published "Capital Schemes", a critique of transport policies in London which shows that:

- Central government is obsessed with road building solutions to London's transport needs;
- Only 16% of commuters get to work by car, much of this traffic subsidised by the company car allowance;
- Car traffic pollutes, threatens homes and open spaces, causes severe loss of life, and undermines the quality of life in London.

The report shows how official calculations value a motorist's time more highly than that of a bus user, pedestrian or cyclist. Colossal sums spent on new roads such as Westway and the M25 have simply created new motorised journeys, while Britain lags decades behind in world developments in public transport.

In an evaluation of Transport Assessment Studies in four key areas of London, FoE uncovers a rebellion by Londoners against further road schemes. According to FoE Transport Campaigner Don Mathew, the official line is revealed to be nonsense: there is very little "essential through traffic" in London, new jobs do not depend on new road building, road "improvements" often add to congestion, and Londoners want better public transport and a better deal for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Capital Schemes is £1.75 from FoE, 377 City Road, London EC1 [01-837 0731].

GREEN STUDENTS

The Green Student network has recently been set up to help share ideas and coordinate campaigns amongst greens in colleges throughout the UK. It produces a regular newsletter, and is holding a Green Student Gathering at Oxford University for May 22/24. All student greens are invited to attend, and to link into the Network. For more information, contact CAMEL, MPSU Greens, c/o Manchester Poly SU, Mandela Building, 99 Oxford Road, All Saints, Manchester [061-273 1182].

LABOUR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SERA is holding a series of regional speaker meetings on this theme during May and June:

BRISTOL May 15 (Transport House, Victoria Street, 7.30pm). EDINBURGH May 25 (with Robin Cook). MILTON KEYNES May 28 (Labour Hall, Newport Road, New Bradwell, 8pm). NORWICH May 29 (Labour Club, 58 Bethel Street, 8pm). NEWCASTLE June 12 (with David Clark). Details: SERA, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG [01-439 3749].

LEVELLERS DAY

The annual Levellers Day celebrations will be held in Burford (Oxon) on Sat May 16. As well as a number of historical workshops, there will be speeches from Dennis Skinner MP and a representative from the ANC, poems from Roger Woddis, videos, a folk concert, and a procession round Burford with Morris dancing. £3.50 in advance, £4 on the day covers all events (starting 10 am in Warwick Hall, Burford); concert only £1.50 at the door (4.30 in Burford Community School); unwaged half price all tickets. Info and tickets: Gladys Lewis, 141 Upper Road, Kennington, Oxford [0865 735380]. Organised by WEA Oxford Industrial Branch.

BRIG'S WRITE

Brig's words of wisdom did not reach us in time this month - sorry Brig! So you will have to wait till June to hear more from our intrepid globetrotter...