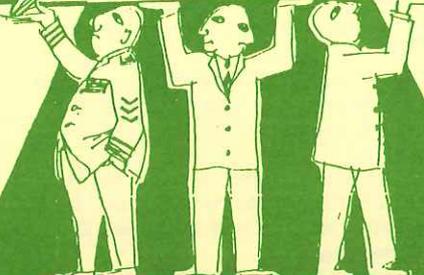


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THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE OF  
GREEN POLITICS AND LIFESTYLE

GREEN LINE is published ten times a year, and is produced by a collective based in Oxford. This issue appeared as a result of the efforts of Carol Guberman, Jerry Spring, Leigh Shaw-Taylor, Barry Maycock, Sarah Tysack and Tim Andrewes. Thanks especially to all those who help collate, staple and stuff this mag into envelopes, but don't get a proper mention. You wouldn't get your mag without their work. If any other readers can offer help we are always pleased to hear from you. You can be sure that there'll be something to do that you're good at. Ring 0865 726229 or 0865 724315

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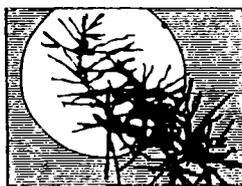
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# What's your vote worth?

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BRITISH PUBLIC — KEN JONES

I DON'T THINK many people would argue with opposing bad laws. But what happens when conventional opposition is a waste of time? It's my contention that when that situation occurs then non-conventional opposition must be resorted to; namely, civil disobedience.

The law in question is the Poll Tax, or Community Charge, as the government likes to call it. This tax, at its most basic, is nothing more or less than a tax on your very existence. With very few exceptions, if you are over 18 and still breathing then you will have to pay. Without taking anything else into account, this qualifies it as bad law.

• Robbing the poor; robbing the young

The Poll Tax will have absolutely nothing to do with the ability to pay. It is a direct transfer of resources from the poor to the rich. For example, a single person with a net income as low as £2,382 p.a. or a family of two adults and two children on a net income of £5,096 p.a. will pay exactly the same tax (if in the same local authority catchment) as the Prime Minister or Mr Ridley, whose gross salaries will shortly rise to £51,068 p.a.

There will of course be a rebate system. It will work like this: A single person facing the average Poll Tax in England (£224 p.a.) will lose all help from rebates as soon as take home pay exceeds the fantastic sum of £53.15 per week. If that person is below the age of 25 then the cut-off point is even lower, just £45.80 per week. A married couple with two children will lose all rebate as soon as their take-home pay reaches around £80-90 per week. Whatever other words can be used to describe this, "fair" isn't one of them.

Even for those on unemployment or supplementary benefit, the maximum rebate will be 80%, leaving these people to find 20% out of their benefits. The government has promised that benefits will be increased by 20% of the average Poll Tax to cover this. It will of course mean that some will gain and some will lose even more. Add to this the fact that there have been high level hints that this help will be transitional only. But then you could have guessed that by looking at what is happening to Child Benefit.

This tax will be a tax on family life. As soon as a child reaches 18 then, bang, the tax must be paid. It has been decided that if one or more members of a household refuse to pay, or simply evade, then that person's liability will be levied on the remainder of the household. This will result in families 'encouraging' youngsters to leave before then to become one of the 'disappeared'. It will also result in the 'encouragement' of the elderly to enter institutions rather than live with their families.

Ethnic minorities will be hit disproportionately hard. They are much more likely to live in the inner cities with higher Poll Taxes, they have a higher average household size, and they tend to have lower than average incomes.

Workers in tied accommodation (e.g. farmworkers, catering workers, caretakers, wardens, nannies etc.) have got an unpleasant surprise coming their way too. Their wages are generally set at a lower level to take account of their free or cheap accommodation. Typically, the employer is responsible for paying rates and recovers this in the form of lower wages. Under the Poll Tax, workers will face their own tax bill while employers will save on the rates. But there is no guarantee that wages and accommodation charges will be adjusted accordingly. Even where employers agree to adjust wages

or even pay the Poll Tax for their worker there are likely to be problems. For example, the N.F.U. in Scotland obtained an assurance from the House of Lords in April 1987 that farmers who pay the Poll Tax for their employees will be able to charge it against their tax bills as a business expense. However, no assurance was given to farm workers that having the Poll Tax paid for them would not be charged against them as a tax perk. The Poll Tax will not vary according to age, and is particularly vindictive towards young people, even though they are more likely to be on a low income. Indeed, in this respect, the government is guilty of applying double standards. Under the recently passed Wages Act, only 'adults' are entitled to the legal minimum rates of pay; adults being defined as those over 21. Under the Poll Tax, all adults will be required to pay; with adults being defined as those over 18!

Young people on leaving home usually occupy the worst accommodation available and usually multi-occupy. At present they have the consolation of generally lower rates because of this but under the Poll Tax this will go. To add insult to injury, they will be entitled to less rebate than older people. The reason is that under the 1986 Social Security Act income support/ supplementary benefit rates for the under-25s will be lower than for other claimants. Since entitlement to Poll Tax rebate will be linked to these differential rates, a young low paid

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BY SUE BROWN & MALLEN

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worker will receive a lower rebate than an older worker on exactly the same wage, paying exactly the same Poll Tax, and even living in exactly the same accommodation.

The average Poll Tax for Inner London residents is estimated at £577 - about £11 per week. Assuming that Poll Tax rebate will follow the same rules that will apply to Rent Rebate from April 1988, a single person with weekly take-home pay of just £55 would receive a rebate of £4 per week (leaving £7 to pay). This is for the over-25s. For those under 25 though, the rebate will be only £2.68, leaving £8.32 to pay each week.

Certain people won't pay the tax. Convicted criminals in jail won't, although the position of those in custody, or on remand isn't clear. Long-term hospital patients will be exempt and certain members of the security services (like the S.A.S) too. Oh yes, and there'll be two other exceptions - the Queen and the Prince of Wales. They pay no direct taxes anyway.

#### An all-Tory snoopers' paradise

The Poll Tax register will be compiled in a variety of ways: direct canvassing (door stepping), checking library records, sports centres and good old fashioned 'snooping'. Worst of all though will be the use of the Electoral register. People who wish to avoid the tax will therefore not register to vote either. Estimates of how many vary up into the millions. These people will naturally tend to be the less wealthy, non property owning part of society - the natural non Conservative voters.

The result of this will be a further distortion of our already imperfect democratic system in favour of the Conservative Party. Moreover, this change could well be permanent since whilst those with property will find it hard to evade, those without will be able to steer clear of officialdom - and the electoral register. But once you non Conservative voters have started evading, best keep on doing it because they'll hit you for all those back taxes.

It's been estimated that local authorities throughout mainland Britain will need to employ at least 10,000 enforcement officers. It is expected that five million summonses will be issued every year in respect of Poll Tax evasion. It has been denied that the introduction of the Poll Tax will lead to the introduction of a national Identity Card system. But how long do you think it'll be before you have to produce proof (i.e. an I.D. card) that you've paid your Poll Tax before you can withdraw a library book, enter a sports centre, see a doctor, enter your child for school etc. etc. etc...?

The eventual effect (intent even?) of the Poll tax will be, to use Mrs Thatcher's phrase, a "property owning democracy". But along the lines of "if you own property you can vote, if you don't own property then you can't." A property owners' democracy would probably be a more accurate description.

#### I refuse to pay for my vote

When I was born, a vote was set aside to be given to me when I reached my majority. That vote was mine to do with as I wished and there were no conditions attached to it. It didn't depend on my paying towards local authority finance, it was mine by right. In the past people devoted their whole lives, and even lost them, to winning this vote for me. In the more recent past many thousands of people gave their lives to ensuring that I could keep that vote. That vote, which so many people fought and died for was unconditional. The Poll Tax, in effect, now places a condition on that vote. If I allow that to happen then I, and anyone else who fails to oppose this tax, am very badly letting down all those people.

So who is going to oppose this law, and how? The overwhelming Conservative 'majority' and the servility of the Conservative backbenchers makes the legislature nothing more or less than Mrs Thatcher's poodle. So parliament can't be depended on to oppose and defeat this bad law. Likewise the judiciary. They're here to defend from us by enforcing law passed by the legislature on instruction from the executive. The media may help a little with publicity, but asking them to take the lead is asking a bit much given their intimidation by the government over Spycatcher. The Royal Family? Come off it! when did they ever support the common people to the detriment of the establishment? The professional classes? Hardly likely, as they are amongst the people who stand to benefit from the changes.

I think that leaves no one but ourselves, folks, so ourselves it'll have to be. And since our only hope of defeating the Poll tax proposals is civil disobedience, I make this personal commitment:-

"I will have nothing to do, in any way, with any aspect of the Poll tax. I will not co-operate in the compilation of the register. If registered by other means, I will refuse to pay. When summonsed, I will ignore it. When arrested, I will not speak other than to express my opinion to the court. my refusal to co-operate will be open and for all to see. If fined, I will refuse to pay. If jailed, then on release I will have exactly the same attitude as before, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES. On principle, I will NEVER, EVER go back on this declaration. I cannot be bought off. I cannot be frightened off."

To support me in my opposition to the Poll Tax I have established a register which I like to call the 'Not the Poll Tax Register'. It consists of names and addresses of like-minded people, people that is, who are in agreement with every word of my statement of personal commitment. The only way to force the withdrawal of the Poll Tax is through co-ordinated defiance. If just one in every thousand of you sends me your name and address then the Poll tax will probably be withdrawn. One in every hundred will guarantee it.

Don't evade the tax - defy it.

Don't think that your name will make no difference - it will.

Every name and address is important. Every name and address is needed. I want your total support in this matter and I want your commitment to be total.

The Soviet Union is rightly condemned for persecuting dissidents. Mrs Thatcher is one of the loudest voices in that condemnation - and I support her in that. But let's see what happens when the Soviet Union (amongst others) starts condemning this country for persecuting dissidents. Because make no mistake, when this country starts persecuting people for evading the Poll Tax, it's not criminals they'll be persecuting, but dissidents. Exactly as happens in the Soviet Union. Then where will Britain's moral self-righteousness be?

Please write to K.W. JONES, CAERFOTY, LLANGOWER, BALA, GWYNNED LL23 7BU giving your name and address to include yourself in the register. Please make sure other people hear or read about the register. Reprint this article if you can. And the more of you join the better: we can't all be jailed. Once on the Not the Poll Tax Register you will know that you are not alone in your opposition. Numbers will win.

Finally, I must emphasise that this is not an attack on Mrs Thatcher but rather an attack on the Poll Tax. However, if she chooses to attach herself so closely to the Poll Tax that she has to go then so be it. But that's up to her of course...

# NETWORK

## GREEN FAIR

Newham Green Fair is at Durning Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, London with all the usual food /health /political stalls. Contact Amanda Sandford 01 637 9843

## FoE BENEFIT

Huddersfield Green Party have Clive Grigson and Christine Collister on the bill 5th Dec at Holmfirth Civic Hall. Contact Ian McCourtie on Huddersfield 510045

## BRADFORD CONFERENCE

The Right Livelihood Award (organisers of the alternative Nobel Prizes) met on Dec 12th at Bradford University to hear 1987 award winners on "Peace through disarmament, development and a healthy productive environment." Line-up includes Hans Peter Durr, Johan Galtung, Frances Moore Lappe and representatives for the Chipko movement and Mordechai Vananu. Tickets are £5/£2

## UNACUSTOMED AS I AM...

Elaine Salter of Camden FoE is organising public speaking workshops for women on Dec 12th and Jan 18th at the London Women's Centre. Contact Elaine at 52D Westbere Rd, London NW2 3RU or 01 435 8887. She adds that she could also arrange mixed groups, but given that men interrupt women three times more than they interrupt men, perhaps men-only public listening workshops might be useful too.



## HEALING AIDS

Stephanie Collins describes in Mediator her experiences as a healer helping her first AIDS patient. Her article makes important points about misconceptions regarding AIDS and the various 'moral' overtones that have become attached to it. By meditation and visualisation therapy she has succeeded in cleansing her patient of a serious pneumonia. Stephanie has workshops on working with AIDS and can be reached at 11 Winfrith Rd, London SW18, tel:01 870 2944

## MUST WAR START IN CHILDHOOD?

Peace Pledge Union are doing some vital work on drawing attention to the problems of those brainwashing war toys, video games, films, books etc. aimed at our children. If you can help raise awareness in the same way as is happening with sexism and racism then contact PPU, Children and War Project, 8 Ehdsligh St, LONDON WC1 01 387 5501. They need help on research for pamphlets, producing alternative toys, relating personal experience of war and so on.



GROWING UP TO LOVE NATURE, by Elizabeth Stutz, is published by Play For Life, a voluntary organization formed to encourage fresh thinking about the play experience of children of all ages. The pamphlet is available from 31b Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR2 2LN, at 90p including p&p. The book discusses the necessity for a closer bond with nature during childhood, and ways in which children can encounter wildlife today, despite the despoliation of the earth. The natural world is discovered in unexpected places, though I found some of the places a bit TOO unexpected - the view of nature from a tower block for example: 'Living high up in tall blocks can offer some great delights for those who think of looking for them. We have a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a wide expanse of sky and its changing moods, of clouds forming and re-forming and scudding across the horizon. Where else in the city can you watch the sun rise and set in all its moods and trace its movements overhead?' Ecology as consolation! See the picture on p.7: 'You may even catch sight of a fox snoozing near a dustbin'. Ah well.

## GREEN TEACHER

Has celebrated its first year with a healthy subscriber list justified by the quality of the mag. If education matters to you (and can it not with smarmy Kenneth Baker about?) then send £10 for a year's sub to Llly Awel, 22Hoel Pentrerhedyn, Machynlleth, Powys, WALES SY20 8DN



## WHAT COMMON FUTURE?

The TOES journal 'New Economics, contains a useful critique of the economic growth assumptions of the Brundtland Report, 'Our Common Future'. Edward Barbier, a development economist and former TOES speaker, questions the idea that the economies of the developing countries could expand at 5-6% a year by relying on improvements in efficiency and environmental sensitivity in developed world economies so as to offset resource demand and pollution in the Third World.

The problem is in the nature of that growth. As Barbier argues: "unless such growth enables the absolute poor to have better access to, control over and management of both economic and environmental resources, its impact on global poverty will be marginal. Instead of advocating economic growth at the national level as the solution to absolute poverty, a better approach

may be to design policies more directly concerned with increasing the material standard of living of the poor at 'grassroots' level, in terms of increased food, real income, education services, health care, sanitation and water supply, emergency stocks of food and cash etc. These policies should only be indirectly concerned with economic growth at the aggregate, national level."

And, given the de-linkage through technology and automation of the link between production and labour, capitalist growth would seem unlikely ever again to provide solutions to chronic unemployment. Hence the urgent need, particularly in the rich nations, to switch to "sustainable growth in human welfare and not just in increased production and consumption of material goods and services." Unfortunately, the report doesn't provide sufficient analysis and policy recommendations to achieve this goal.

EDUCATION, LIKE NEUROSIS,  
 BEGINS AT HOME.  
 Milton R. Sapirstein  
 (1953)

DO AS I SAY,  
 NOT AS I DO



**JOHN PAT PLUS 100**

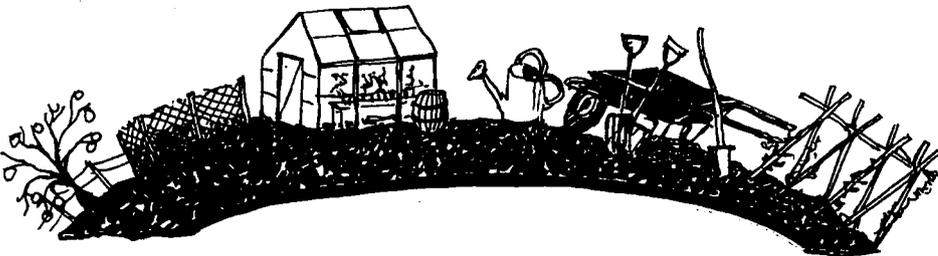
Official Statistics say 64 since 1980, but others reckon that 100 will be nearer the final figure for deaths in police custody of Australia's original people. Now, widespread protests since the particularly gruesome death of 18 year-old John Pat - left to bleed to death in a cell after a fight with police - have finally forced an official commission of enquiry.

Black Rights groups have figures showing that on average in Rowbourne, where John Pat once lived, every aboriginal man, woman and child gets arrested 3 times a year. Nationally, aborigines (1% of the population) make up 14% of prisoners, often arrested for petty offences and too poor to pay the fines. In some country towns black unemployment is 100% and nationally is 8 times higher than for whites.

The police maintain that the deaths are suicides - but then haven't we heard that before, like in South Africa? It's certainly going to be interesting to see what kind of history is paraded before the world next year during Australia's bicentenary celebrations of the 'discovery' of Australia.

**SMALL BEGINNINGS**

Resurgence is running an interesting series of articles on the theme of small projects laying the foundations for the sane future. The Nov-Dec issue looks at an employment agency (Exchange Resources in Bath 0225 69671) that helps people with skills that tend to be dominated by the arms industry to find jobs without military applications. Included too are articles on building your own home and the neglected but once common craft of green woodworking with its reliance on local resources.



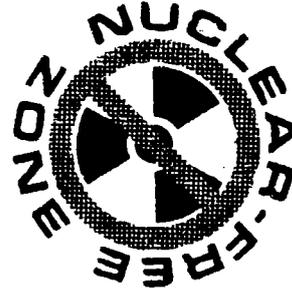
**ANYONE FOR SUNBURN?**

Following the Montreal signing of the treaty to protect the ozone layer (GL55,56), the latest reports from Antarctica confirm the alarming trend of previous years. Moreover, the latest survey confirmed what had already been assumed by many - that CFCs are the root problem.

Given that many scientists predicted this it is suspicious that the Montreal gathering had to take place just too soon to acknowledge the latest evidence. Now the signatories will have to be forced back to the negotiating table to review the treaty - which they are supposed to do if new data arrives.

At present rates of CFC emission, the protocol, if held to, will allow stratospheric chlorine (the main catalyst of ozone breakdown) to rise to 3 times its present level by 2020. What the effects of that will be on agriculture and health don't bear thinking about. CFC and halon production simply has to be stopped now. When will the politicians ever learn?

**CONGRATULATIONS**



Are due to the Italian people for their rejection of expanding nuclear power. The result of the recent referendum means that any local authority can veto a proposed station and makes illegal those financial "sweeteners" to local communities so loved by the French nuclear industry. Italy joins Sweden, Austria, Denmark and Portugal in booting out nuclear power. Perhaps HM Government might take the hint now.

**FARMERS FOR CHANGE**

A farmers Third World Network is being formed to try and get some sense into the gross absurdities of current agriculture and share knowledge with other countries. There are already local as well as specialist groups. More from John Jones, Centre Cefn, Craigllwyn, Oswestry, Shropshire



**MALAYSIAN DEMOCRACY**

The government of Malaysia must be getting embarrassed by its people's criticism and publicising of crony corruption, environmental mismanagement and racial war against indigenous tribal nations in Malaysia. In a recent trawl, the police have arrested senior representatives of Sahabat Alam (SAM), Malaysia's equivalent of FoE and the Consumer Association of Penang (CAP), along with leaders of feminist groups, community lawyers and trade union organisers.

For example, Ms Meenakshi Raman, a community rights lawyer, was due in court to sue the Asian Rare Earth Company for illegally dumping radiocative waste in the town of Bukit Merah. Local people had even been led to believe that it could be used as fertilizer. Mr Harrison Ngau has led the fight on the island of Sarawak (see box) to protect the Penan and other indigenous groups from the predations of logging concerns. Mr Arokia Dan, a prominent union organiser, has been central to the exposure of the appalling working conditions in factories and farms.

Ironcially, the PM, Datuk Mahathir Mohammed, has claimed that the arrests were needed to reduce racial tensions, yet those detained include people leading efforts to unite and provide justice for Malaysia's racial groups.

But then since CAP has recently been hounding the government over the environmental costs of a pan-Malaysia highway and the Bakan Dam Project, and its newspaper 'Utusan Konsumer' regularly exposes the lack of compensation for injured and poisoned workers or has told Malaysians of the dangers of pesticides and insecticides that the government permits but which have been long banned in other countries, then the real reasons for the clampdown become clear.

When CAP and SAM have publicised the way ministers have approved bank takeovers beneficial to their own families, or the extensive holdings awarded to past and present ministers in the timber concessions and logging companies which are currently trying to drive the people of Sarawak into the sea, then the real reasons for the clampdown become clear.

The Malaysian constitution lays down that "all persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law". It is about time that the Malaysian government read it themselves. But then, perhaps they thought "protection" should be understood in the Al Capone sense...

# Prague's silent Spring

The environment in Czechoslovakia is in a dire state and there are already serious consequences for the health of those who have to live and work in it. A number of independent groups like the mainly Czech Charter 77 or the Slovak Union for the Protection of the Environment and Countryside (SZPOK) have been exploiting the openings for debate now appearing in Eastern Europe to publish damning reports on the destruction of Czechoslovakia. These have appeared in the British media mainly through the work of Misha Glenny (who has written in The Guardian and New Scientist 24.9.87) and through mags like the excellent East European Reporter (PO Box 222, London WC2H 9RP)

One of the worst affected regions is Bohemia, bordering on East Germany. It is here that lignite is mined in vast quantities to supply about 80% of the country's electricity. The problem is that lignite is highly inefficient and large amounts of sulphur dioxide go up the chimney: Czechoslovakia produces twice as much as West Germany with only a quarter of the population to supply with energy. Not surprisingly, the once beautiful forested Ore Mountains are rapidly becoming an

acid wasteland.

Down in the heavily industrialised northern cities smog is a constant and dangerous hazard. Life expectancy in northern Bohemia is between 3 and 4 years less than the rest of the country and infant mortality is 12% higher along with bronchial and skin diseases. The State is slowly poisoning its people.

The importance of environmentalists speaking out is that up till recently the government was able to hush up the situation - even though you only need to smell the air to know something is wrong. Financial incentives are offered to keep skilled people in the most polluted regions, the unskilled don't have a choice anyway. Now there does appear to be an acknowledgement from Prague that something needs to be done. However, measures that have been taken appear designed to prop up the ailing system rather than abandon it. Yet even to offset the effects of the pollution will require far more money than the Czechoslovakian government can afford. Sulphur dioxide pollution alone is reckoned to have caused between £770m and £1.9b worth of damage already.

Another problem is that the authorities see nuclear power as the way forward (Walter Marshall would feel quite at home) and expect nuclear power to produce 50% of the country's electricity by 2000. The plans for nuclear power are given a thorough mauling in the Charter 77 document reprinted in East European Reporter vol 2.3. They point out that it is actually impossible to site a nuclear power station in Czechoslovakia which complies with US recommendations on finding a location with a low population density. In Bratislava, a nuclear power station is being built in the middle of a suburb of 70,000 residents. Someone forgot to tell the government about Chernobyl. But then, maybe they think Bratislava's environment is already a dustbin. SZOPK report that pollutants like sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide are already 13-15% above official limits and that the state oil refinery leaks 10,000 tons of unrefined oil into the Danube every year.

One can only hope that the bravery of those now speaking out will be rewarded in the new political thaw sparked by Gorbachev and that the State will stop waging a chemical war against its own people.

In a style typical of nearly all nations in the treatment of indigenous people, the Malaysian State has leased some 60% of Sarawak to logging concerns, most of whom are not from Sarawak or even Malaysia. Currently, between 1,500 and 2,000 sq km of forest is being cleared every year. That means that half of Sarawak's forests, its greatest resource, will be gone within 10 years. We in the EEC have a direct responsibility for this since we import some 11 million cubic metres of tropical hardwoods every year, a large part of which comes from Southeast Asia.

The concessions have, in many cases, been granted by the government without the prior consent or even the knowledge of the people living in them. In other cases, local people have been tricked into selling the forest at rates that have no relation to the eventual value of the timber or to the effect on their own futures. Formal complaints to the police, federal and state governments have been ignored. Court actions face delays of up to 12 years - by which time there won't be anything left to argue about. Communal Forest Reserves have been reduced from a paltry 303 to 58 sq km and new applications have been unsuccessful.

## GET OFF YOUR LAND!

The tribal peoples such as the Penan, Kelabit, Kayan and Kenyah, who together make up 70% of Sarawak's population, have finally turned to NVDA and have succeeded in putting a halt to much of the logging. Their demands are simple - justice and control over their own birthplace. But given Malaysia's foreign debts, it won't be long before official patience is replaced by official violence and the protesters get removed to allow the exports to flow again.

These people need all the help we can give them. Write (politely, if possible) to YAB Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohammed, PM of Malaysia, PM Department, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA or YAB Datuk Puteggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, Chief Minister of Resource Planning, Chief Minister's Office, Petra Jaya, Kuching, Sarawak, MALAYSIA

Other organisations to contact for info or to give support include Survival International, 29 Craven St, London WC2N 5NT and Sahabat Alam (FoE Malaysia), 37 Lorong Birch, Penang 10250 Malaysia. They also coordinate the Asia Pacific People's Environment Network (APPEN). But please send an International Reply Coupon if you want a reply.

The UK equivalent to APPEN is The Rainforest Action Network (RAN), 99 Prospect Rd, Portstewart, Northern Ireland.

Malcolm Samuel of Northern Ireland Ecology Party has produced a leaflet that's ideal for raising rainforest issues on the street etc. He can supply them at £2 per 100 or £7 per 400. Write to him at RAN. Remember that the EEC exports 11 million c.m of tropical hardwoods, mostly from Southeast Asia and West Africa.



For more info contact Charles Secrett or Koy Thompson of FoE on 01 490 1555 /0290. Fund raising and letter writing needed.





# regurgence

## Politics from the comfy chair

PENNY  
NEWSOME

The New Renaissance. Essays in Search of Wholeness  
Maurice Ash. £5.95  
People and Planet: Alternative Nobel Prize Speeches Ed.  
Tom Woodhouse. £6.50  
Breaking Through: Theory and Practice of Wholistic Living  
Walter & Dorothy Schwarz. £6.50  
All published by Green Books

I SUPPOSE we should all be grateful for "Green Books". Writing books is a toil like any other and the green movement should welcome any attempt to formulate precisely what we are all trying to think. If we disagree with the formulation, then this itself may help us to think more clearly. The trouble with at least two of the Green Books already available is that they formulate rather vaguely what many of us have been thinking rather precisely, and worse, they formulate thoughts which are sometimes not green at all. I shall concentrate on these thoughts, simply because these are the ones which must not take root.

### • Renaissance, what Renaissance?

The first of these books to come my way was The New Renaissance by Maurice Ash. Well the title is off-putting for a start. In a world that has been visibly deteriorating, and more and more rapidly, such optimism looks a little suspicious. Maurice Ash does admit that it might perhaps be "dangerously rhetorical...to speak in terms of a New Renaissance" but nonetheless he believes that: "Not only in Britain, but throughout Western Europe, people are responding less and less to hypnosis by the qualified allurements of the Industrial Era, and in a swelling flood are realizing Ruskin's dictum that 'there is no wealth but life'". The evidence for this appears to consist in, "for instance, the reversal of two hundred years of rural depopulation (p.10)... people want to escape from the anomie of urban life". Unfortunately, as anyone who has investigated the possibility of moving to the country will know, this is actually an option only open to the already rich - those who not only have some capital, but also have no need to sell their labour. Such people will no doubt enjoy this book, just as they enjoy reading Resurgence magazine. For this book is in fact a collection of Maurice Ash's articles, talks etc. over quite a few of the past years, reiterating ideas that will be familiar to the readers of Resurgence. Green Books come from that very stable and bear the unmistakable trademarks - New Age, wordy, other-worldly, waffly, irrelevant, elitist, patronising... Well so it must seem to

those of us who live in less green pastures.

Maurice Ash's book is definitely the most 'Resurgence' of the three. As Scott Fitzgerald said: "The very rich are different from you and me" and for one thing, they have more time, not only to write books, but to read them as well. Maurice Ash has worked in his life, directing various key New Age institutions like the Town & Country Planning Association and Dartington Hall, and you can read about his work experience (as well as some of the books he's read) in this book. But who, reading it, is going to have time to check up on the references to Wittgenstein (ch. 1 line 1): and are there any "resonances aside for the cogniscenti of Godel's theorem" (p.4)? No, this collection of undated backnumbers, reading more like a textbook for medieval schoolmen, is definitely not for undergardeners. And if you hope this might be the quick guide to the undergraduate course in Philosophy, Politics & Economics which you weren't privileged enough to take, then be wary. The 'ecosophy' of Resurgence magazine sometimes looks like sophistry to me.

Take this statement for example: "socialism is in effect merely a function of capitalism...socialism is simply not free to discuss alternative technology (p.58)". Well, socialism in, e.g. SERA, has been discussing alternative technology for some time. So who is this kind of statement designed to mislead? If you feel you must read this book then keep all your most critical, even cynical, faculties about you.

### • The Whole truth

Maurice Ash is modest enough to be only searching for "Wholeness". However, Walter and Dorothy Schwarz, coming along third in the series with Breaking Through - Theory and Practice of Wholistic Living, seem to think they have found it. Those of us who have read Walter Schwarz over the years will recognize the zeal of the new convert. What is the motive for rushing into print? No doubt, to proselytize, and again one must ask; to whom? I doubt if faithful readers of Green line need to take time out to read them. Breaking Through is avowedly New Age but I'm afraid that (in spite of Simon Young - GL55) I prefer to be green. Although the Schwarzes profess to be campaigning for a Green Future (ch. 14), their Green Future is not one that I would wholeheartedly welcome. I think it is a bit cheeky of the Schwarzes, who do warn us in the introduction that "writing this book is the most wholistic thing we have ever done", to tell us what being green is all about. This age is no "newer" than any other. All these ideas have been around for yonks. Better to my mind to read a few classics like Gaia by Kit Pedler than these new rehashes of other people's experiences.

One of the most noticeable features of the Schwarzes book is their need to quote other people the whole time. In some chapters practically every paragraph begins with a new name and a footnote. I suppose this is because of a lifetime's training in journalism. The footnotes are of course welcome - there are none in Maurice Ash's book - but even more useful, and none of these books has one, would have been an index. Quantification and measurement, fruits of reductionist thinking, are already much derided by the New Renaissance. Now apparently, not only indexes but perhaps even chapters are unnecessary to wholistic books. The new paradigm merely looks like a recipe for a new kind of confusion - a seamless web of confusion in which it's even more difficult to detect the logical fallacies than it was in the old specialized fields of knowledge.

Of course, if you're New Age then knowledge itself is the old, or rather, present paradigm and logic and reason must give place to intuition and feeling. Schumacher, who according to Maurice Ash "if anyone, was the prophet of the alternative movement ...proclaimed in brief, the shift of the paradigm: from knowledge to meaning." It looks as

if the words of the prophet and - of course - his apostolic succession in the Schumacher Society might have more significance for Resurgence readers than a Freedom of Information Act. Furthermore, as the Schwarzes admit: "Even if a new paradigm emerges to replace the linear-scientific one, that may not suffice to change the way we live and act... We will have replaced one set of lites(sic - lies???) with another and will continue, as Berman warns, to be more interested in our explanations of reality than in reality itself." Exactly so. This precious new paradigm is not only insufficient, it is not necessary either.



• In defence of facts

In all recorded history we have had the kind of practical projects which the Schwarzes have rushed about visiting, and which they describe quite interestingly in their chapters on decolonised communities and sustainable this and that. Such projects are the focus of the second of the books in the Green Books series, People and Planet, Alternative Nobel Prize Speeches edited by Tom Woodhouse. These projects through the ages have sown a few seeds, but we are not yet anywhere near the harvest which these New Age people seem to hope is imminent. Why not? Because these projects have always been few and marginal and crushed sooner or later by those with the real power. This power operates more subtly today than when Cromwell's troops simply slaughtered Winstanley and his fellows. There have after all been a few, historically linear, political victories since the 17th century and a bit of Social Security thanks to the 20th century Labour Party.

I was interested, and saddened, by the account of the Easterhouse Festival Society (Breaking Through p.71-76). This project is foundering, apparently because "the drug culture is more prominent than we are". Surprise, surprise. It's much the same where I live too: the opium of the people and all that. I suppose the "scientifically and ecologically aware religion" that Maurice Ash and the Schwarzes are searching for could compete but it looks

unlikely to me. I live in a fairly 'sought after' area, but if I hadn't happened to have known better things in my youth then I would think the environment consisted of litter, dogshit and motorbikes. Wouldn't it be better to speak up against the particular abuses in question: plant some trees, ask why some kids have only this street to play in while others can luxuriate at Dartington Hall, than waste time on the armchair theory and practice of Wholism?

On first reading of People and Planet I was favourably impressed. I thought that at least third world projects, consumer campaigns and alternative technology are things that are really happening in the world itself. Amory Lovins, for instance, got an award. His book Soft Energy Paths(1977), was one of the original greats. My son asked me yesterday: "What is wrong with nuclear fusion, Mum?" I am ashamed to say I couldn't answer offhand, other than it was a complete waste of money on jobs for the boys and that it did actually produce radioactive waste products, though they said it didn't. Oh for the days of '77 when we had this knowledge at our fingertips and had never heard of Deep Ecology? (Deep Ecology is meaningful rather than knowledgeable - see Ash, chs. 2 & 3 and Schwarzes ch.8). My son, aged nearly 19, isn't often asked to defend his position on Deep Ecology but having campaigned against the JET project in 1977, his inquisitive peers, with parents in the business, now want to know why he's not impressed by their high salaries, high esteem in society etc. I'm afraid that, whatever the importance to me of Lovin's earlier book, his speech reprinted in People & Planet would not have been of much help to my son. He already knows that "it matters that you care" (p.21). What he needs is hard facts to back him up.

But the new non-reductionist, non-compartmentalised paradigm is rather against facts. For example, Maurice Ash is against Environmental Studies as a school subject if this means supplying facts and figures (p.183). Why? Because the environment is a "mystery (p.75)." I believe such "incoherent talk" is extremely dangerous. It opens up the green movement to manipulation by an order of witch doctors - experts on Wholeness, the spiritual dimension and so on - to replace the 'priests' who have failed us - scientists, doctors, economists, the Christian Church, Buddhists; all these are indicted. These New Age, purportedly green, witch doctors (would) write books, pontificate on television, organise lecture series, teaching us all how to think in the New Renaissance paradigm of Wholeness. And the children are crying out for bread! Bread happens to be a physical entity which can be weighed and measured. I am sick and tired of the New Age anathema on quantification and measurement. They can stuff their sentimentality (Breaking Through p.203) - I'll settle for kilos of bread for the 850 million now starving in the world as it is. Possibly the publishing of People and Planet and the other green books could do what Christ and the Buddha failed to do - change the paradigm of the rich and powerful...

A few interesting facts can be gleaned from these three books but you have to plough through a lot of verbiage. What is worse, is that a lot of that verbiage is itself ill-digested, inaccurate and misleading - and some of it is downright pernicious. What, for example, do you make of the following in a chapter called 'The Feminine Principle' in Breaking Through? The Schwarzes, overcome with the enthusiasm from discovering such a principle, choose a man as representative "much of current green thinking on this issue". This man happens to be Jonathan Porritt, and private conversations with him are reported in other chapters as well, particularly the chapter on the Green Future. (One concludes that he is the Schwarzes 'green guru'.) However, the Schwarzes have not understood green feminism at all. Consider the following statement (p.198): "In the green movement, the most sympathetic political movement to feminine values, the positions high up in the hierarchy are still male

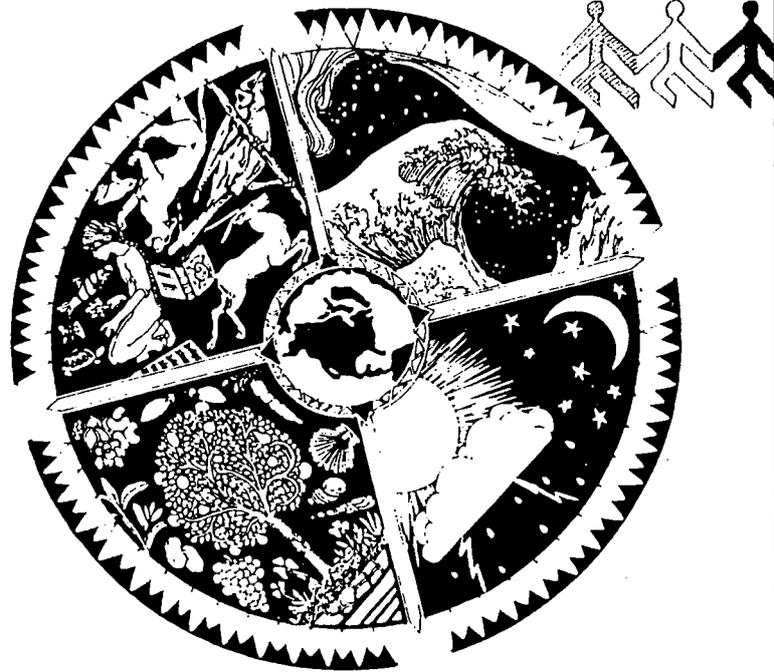
dominated." The Schwarzes (how long have they been involved in the Green Party?) accuse the greens of paying lip service to feminine values and of still being dominated by patriarchal values. Well, I am sure readers of Green Line will agree that talk about "positions high up in the hierarchy" is basic to patriarchal thinking. How many women, one wonders, are high up in the hierarchy of the Schumacher Society? The green movement is, or ought to be, not only non-sexist but also non-hierarchical. Schumacher - who incidentally appeared late in the history of the alternative movement - was also imbued with hierarchical thinking (see e.g. A Guide for the Perplexed p.74). This is the kind of thinking which leads me to wonder whether these Green Books are really green at all.

There are other sweeping statements that should make one very wary of accepting these books as the new gospel of a New Renaissance. I must protest at throwaway remarks like: "in the sixties the hippies were not concerned with famine in the third world; today many schoolchildren care and many try to help (Breaking Through)." Maurice Ash has a go at the hippies too: "abandoned, as the hippies were, to an anti-social existence." I suppose this comes from using the term 'hippy' or 'green' to describe anyone who is trying to break through the ruling paradigm of their age. Not only did most hippies care (of course it's the exceptions that are notorious - just wait till greens become a real threat to the system, like the labour left is for instance, for the smear campaigns to begin against the greens) but the paradigm of wholeness was exactly why they dropped out. The linear one-dimensional life was what they were refusing; the student rebellions of 1968 were their attempt (along with the New Left, who wanted politics rather than consciousness to change) to break through. Unfortunately, today's schoolchildren give 'charity' to the Third World because the capitalist world order that causes famine was not brought down by either Che Guevara or flower power in the sixties - it isn't going to be brought down by Wholism in the nineties either.

• Real needs need real solutions

I don't want to completely rubbish this New Age stuff. Who, calling themselves a green, could object to the search for wholeness? Simon Young (GL55) says that "New Age and Green are compatible." Well, they could be; we haven't yet defined 'green'. But we can say what is not green. New Age Resurgence people will have to enter into a much humbler dialogue with the grassroots of the green movement before they can call themselves green. I would suggest that a Green Party conference is a better education than any of the New Age conferences around. However, the best education of all is to live on the dole in the inner city. For it may be easy 'breaking through' down in Devon but to restore the psychological damage done by eight years of Reagan/Thatcherism to a whole generation of the human race is probably impossible. And I'm afraid it'll take more than one Small School down in Hartland to save the next one. But we all have to do what we can - and at least these three books are about people trying to do just that. I just beg them all to be a little more humble about it.

As my father was wont to say: you can do anything you want to make the world a better place, just so long as you don't want to get the credit for it. On the other hand, to pin your name to books with titles like The New Renaissance or Breaking Through when, in spite of all this Wholism around, the real world is getting worse, seems far more condemnable than the "romantic enthusiasm" of the sixties generation. They were largely nameless but they put a stop to the Vietnam war. I'll be impressed if the Schumacher Society can stop the Contras

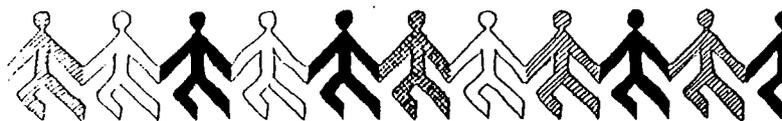


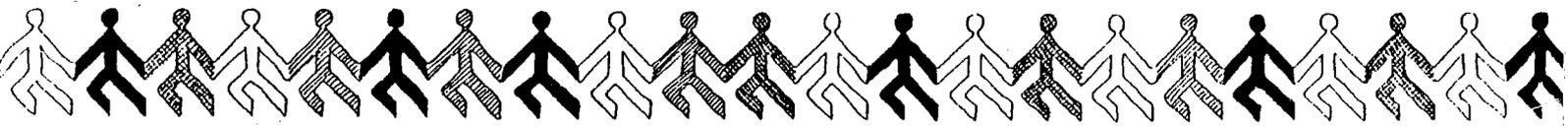
YOU KNOW the scene: you go to a meeting, there's a chairperson, a secretary, and several people who all seem to know what the group is doing and where it's going. A few (like you?) feel slightly out of place. Some have just come in from the bar, others have just taken an hour to nurse a teething baby to sleep. The meeting goes its way as a collection of strangers who can't even see each other. Each meeting is different, but in traditionally held meetings you can guarantee that at least one person will feel that everyone missed the whole point. Often several people will not have spoken at all.

After such meetings I used to be left with a sense of opportunities wasted, ideas yet unborn, a synergy that never was - here we were, six or a dozen people who were willing to put everything else aside to be here now, for a good reason, and what actually happened? How could a group of well-educated, enlightened humans, having so much in common and all speaking the same language.....how could we, with mind numbing consistency, always and only come up with some kind of lowest common denominator?

Well, there is a way of conducting a meeting that creates a medium in which change is possible. A way that is empowering for everybody, not just for the dominant ones, or the elite, or for men only, or the left-brain ones only, or even the greens only. A way that teaches and strengthens the art of listening, that puts the ego in its place, and that allows space for the meek to speak (for it is they who shall inherit the earth). It is a Medicine way from the healing traditions of the North American Native Peoples.

My credentials for having the cheek to offer you this are over twenty years experience in seeking effective guidelines for communication, problem solving and harmony. I started with established methods, taking a law degree, a diploma in management studies and working for seven years in Organisation and Methods in large organisations. Escaped via a Comner Walk-thru truck (possibly one of the most liberating vehicles ever invented?) to a self-sufficient commune in Wales, with its own rules, democracy and economy. From there to the self-improvement and New Age movements, learning a lot about myself, focalising Relationships seminars, and helping to form Prana, a group of people that has grown into a conscious family exploring the ways and teachings of the American Indians. Over the last seven years we have produced five cassettes of simple music and chants. We have been working with the circle since 1979 and with the talking stick since 1981. To bring you fully



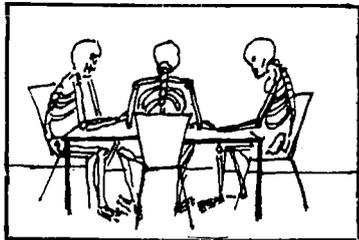


up to date, I am now a part-time hermit in darkest rural Shropshire with my woman mate Diana, and am appearing as an Ugly Sister in Bridgnorth's Cinderella this Christmas.)

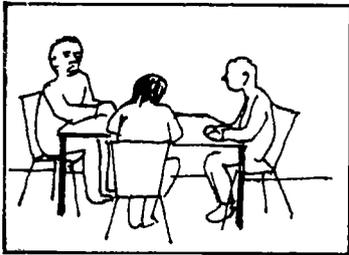
To keep things short I am offering you a recipe to follow if you wish to produce beautiful meetings. Take it or leave it. As in all recipes, there's a lot of trial and error, or good strong tradition behind each item.

1. Be clear on time, i.e. be clear when you shall all be present, be clear that you all have the intent to form a circle, and be clear on your commitment to the circle until it is complete.

2. Sit in a circle. If you think the room is too small, try it anyway. Two concentric circles is much better than rows of people all facing The Chair. Ensure that everyone in the circle can see everyone else. Ideally, have a fire in the centre, but a candle will do. When you speak in the circle, only speak into this flame.



# Do your meetings



## heal or divide?

3. Hold hands for 1-2 minutes. Sing three OMs with no attempt to start or stop at the same time. Release hands.

4. Be conscious of where you sit in the circle, geographically. The American Indian medicine teachings place great emphasis on the four directions. If your back is to the South you would expect, ultimately, to be able to transmit and receive the forces of trust and innocence, of youthful growth and exuberance, of emotions. From the North come strength and wisdom, from the West comes introspection and awareness of the physical body and from the East comes far-sightedness and inspiration. It doesn't matter if you don't believe any of this, so long as you are aware that once there was a noble, enlightened civilisation, living in balance on the Earth, that was attuned to important energies of which our science is still ignorant. Nature was their guide. Our ancestors wiped those people out in an unbelievably brutal way. We owe it to the planet, and to our own self-esteem, to learn as much as we can from their teachings.

5. Take a wooden stick as your Talking Stick. It might be a stick you always use for this purpose, decorated with beads, jewels, feathers and braiding. It can be anything natural, like a stone. Anyone starts the circle with the suggestion that the talking stick go round. If it is agreed, that person, or alternatively, the person sitting in the East, holds the stick and starts the circle.

6. When it is your turn to speak, hold the stick and start by introducing yourself by name. Say your truth directly into the flame. Accuse nobody. Involve no one else in your sharing. Seek no one's approval. Be as true as you can to your emotions right now. If a choice of thoughts comes to you, choose the path with heart in it. When you have finished, say "Ho" clearly, or "I have spoken". Pass the stick to the person on your left. Say no more.

7. When not holding the stick, just listen. Do not interrupt. (This can take practice!) Say "Ho" every time a person finishes speaking. You may say "I have also spoken" if you agree strongly with something someone else has said. Do not break the circle. Listen as part of a greater whole giving Itself time to consider.

8. When the stick returns to the person who started, she or he may ask the circle if they wish to continue passing the stick round. Three rounds are often necessary for the full airing of a question. If in doubt, pass the stick round again. The wheel has turned when a final round of 'Ho's is made without anyone making any further comment. The circle is then complete.

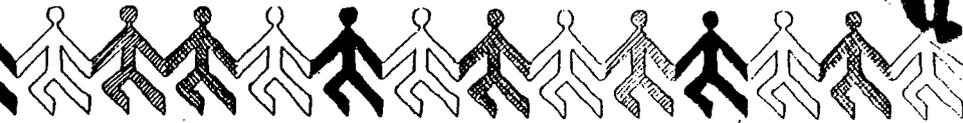
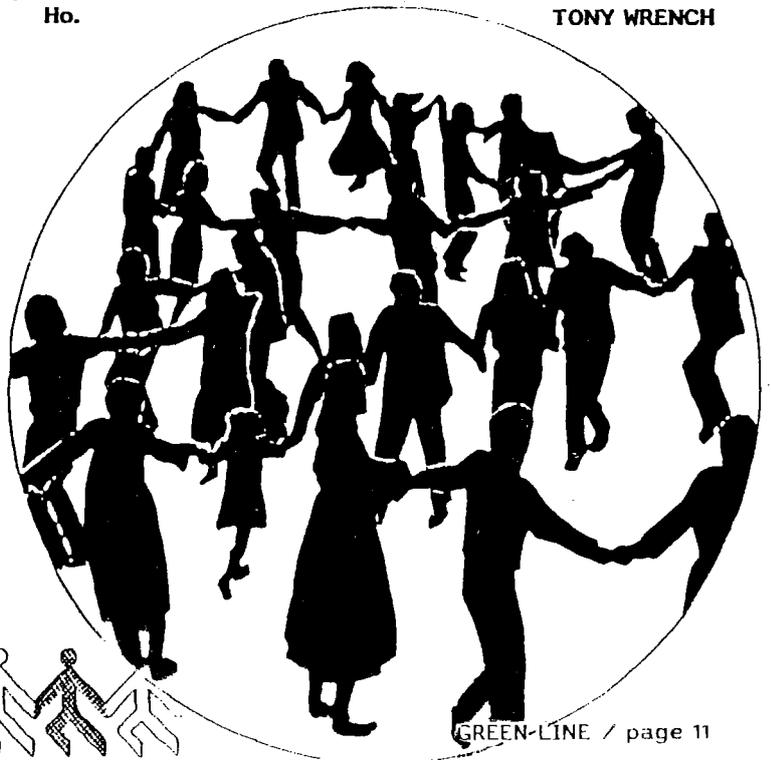
9. As an option, after each round, the stick can be placed in the centre for individuals to take and speak at will. This facilitates some decisions requiring the exchanges of questions and answers, for example. Do not rely exclusively on this method however, as it can let in old ego imbalances very quickly.

10. At the end hold hands again. Attune with another OM. It's nice to sing a bit before breaking the circle.

That's it. It works with groups of children, old people, families, peace groups, candidate selection committees...it would transform the Cabinet. Please try this recipe with your groups and watch the results. Everyone will thank you for it.

Ho.

TONY WRENCH





## DRIFTING TO DESTRUCTION

Sea Shepherd's 'Log' highlights a new trend in enormous drift net fishing, widely used by the Koreans, Japanese and Taiwanese. In 1988 a staggering 250,000 marine mammals and nearly a million seabirds died uselessly in these nets. Now the Canadians want to join the fun having tried a 35 mile-long net for 2 weeks which caught 500,000 squid (the target) but also 8 whales, 40 dolphins and porpoises, 400 seabirds and over 33,000 sharks. The Canadian Minister of Fisheries described the results as "encouraging".

Due to legal pressure, bad publicity and the presence of Sea Shepherd's ship "Divine Wind" (Kamikaze in Japanese), the sea 'miners' left 30 days early this season. There is some hope that the US congress may at least impose a ban on drift net fishing in US waters, although the US government's record on punishing nations that break the IWC whaling moratorium doesn't give much hope for the effectiveness of any ban. Whaling will also be the cause of future struggles this winter as Japan's 'scientific' Minke slaughter (see GL55) gets going and Iceland joins those defying the IWC rulings. Sea Shepherd are at PO Box 114, Plymouth PL1 1DR



### FOXHUNTING MEETING

There will be a public meeting on December 9th on 'Foxhunting and its Abolition' at Oxford Town Hall, 8pm. Speakers will include Mike Huskisson, Ralph Cook and Joe Hashman. Admission is free. Contact Oxford 53351

Please send any donations you can afford to provide funds for the campaign and an s.a.e. or two if you would like to receive further lists of prisoners to SARP BCM Box 5911, London WC1N 3XX Tel:01 888 2482. If you have any information on prisoners then please let the campaign know.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO RONNIE LEE...

YES, THEY got you, Ronnie, and put you away for ten years; perhaps they feel that if they smash you and those other brave souls with you they can smash the whole movement; perhaps they feel that in the end they can break us all, body and soul. No doubt they 'interrogated' you, perhaps they roughed you up a little, or even beat you up quite badly; they often do. And at first they made you a 'Category A' prisoner, a terrorist, a threat to the State (and is Thatcher classed 'Category A' for her part in the Falklands deaths, the bombing of Libya?); they penned you in, made you exercise in a cage, kept an infra-red light on all night; yes they caged you up 'like aa animal'. And how that phrase slipped out, how significant it is! For you fought for the animals and now you suffer their fate - the fate of those millions of creatures who at this very moment pace the confines of their cells, gnawing at the bars in their wretchedness and despair, awaiting the cruel incision, the electrodes, the electric shock, other unspeakable horrors; and if they could curse (but they cannot curse, only gaze out with sad eyes) they would curse the day they were doomed to share this planet with such as human beings. For what act could be so monstrous, what crimes cry aloud and demand not to be put aside, never to be forgotten, as to take away a harmless and helpless creature to be cut up, used up, discarded, and then thrown away like so much rubbish, so much dead matter?

So what are you doing now, Ronnie? Perhaps sleeping in that place which never sleeps; perhaps it is quiet, but it is never really quiet; there will be the crash of iron doors, the rattle of keys, the echoing footsteps down echoing corridors; and here I walk the free streets in the sunshine, weeping, ashamed of my freedom, guilty, guilty at being free; nothing I can do can ever be enough, writing can never be a substitute for action, action not a substitute for the one ACT in which

life and freedom can be risked for the sake of the animals. And I know that fantasies cannot sustain me - fantasies in which I can tear down the prisons brick by brick, stone by stone, to set you free, and together we enter the factory farms and the laboratories and confront those torturers face to face. And I know those dreams come out of despair - and I know that if I nourish those fantasies, if I nurse them and sustain them, then one day I will become like the animal abusers, and share a kinship of blood and vengeance; and this would be the ultimate infection, the final corruption, and they will have won their last victory.

For what good is Direct Action after all? Its effect is infinitesimal, like taking a grain of sand away from the desert; nothing is really changed by such actions, of course they are useless, doubly self-deceiving. But if such actions are useless, then why are the powerful so afraid? Why are the authorities quite happy to have us marching round and round all day with banners and slogans, and so scared of the one free person who acts directly out of passion and conviction, and all the other spontaneous acts of a few untrammelled souls? For in fact they are deadly afraid - and they would still be afraid if there was but one animal liberationist left, or just one Cruisewatcher, and only one woman left at Greenham; and if all these were swept away and we were all closed up in prisons, yet the idea would remain, would never be destroyed, a seed that would bring forth actions as relentless and as truly unending as the desert sand.

The raids went on even as the prison doors shut fast upon you, Ronnie; the voice of animal liberation cannot be stilled, nor the idea shut tight behind stone walls; and if we all believe this, if we reclaim our power to act, those ideas would be all around you, singing in the air like singing birds, when at last you walk away from those obscene prison walls to freedom.

BARRY MAYCOCK

## SUPPORT ANIMAL RIGHTS PRISONERS

Please write to the prisoners listed below (where there is more than one prisoner at a prison, write separate letters) expressing your solidarity and support and keep them in touch with what is happening in the movement. Remember though that all letters to prisoners are opened and censored, so obviously do not discuss anything that could jeopardise future actions or someone's freedom.

Please don't expect a reply as prisoners are restricted as to the number of letters they can write each week and obviously they will probably want to use these to keep in touch with people they knew before entering prison.

If you write to or telephone the prison authorities to make enquiries or to protest about something, please do not be abusive as there may be a comeback on the prisoner.

 Brendan McNaally  
HM Prison Acklington,  
Morpeth, Northumberland  
NE65 6XF

 Gary Cartwright  
HM Prison Lindholme,  
Bawtry Rd,  
Hatfield Woodhouse,  
Doncaster, S.Yorks  
DN7 8DG

 Viv Smith P34583  
Julie Rodgers P34407  
HM Prison Styal,  
Wilmslow, Cheshire  
SK9 4HR

 Ronnie Lee V02682  
HM Prison Armley,  
Leeds, W.Yorks  
LS12 2TJ



# LABOUR'S

## Victorian values

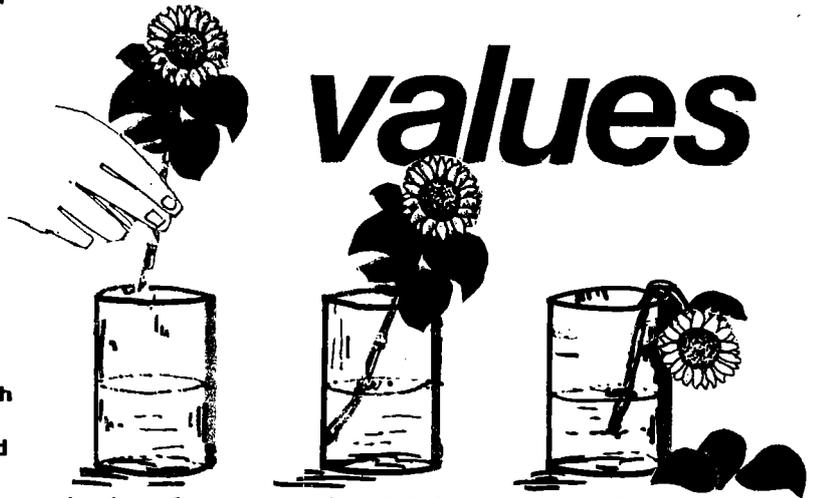
JON CARPENTER reports from the 'Socialist Conference' held in Chesterfield in October.

IF SOCIALISTS conferring in Chesterfield on the weekend of October 24 were very much concerned with re-affirming traditional socialist politics, there were nonetheless signs of change on the horizon. But evidence of this came in the form of tiny green specks among the fallout from the conference, detectable to those with eyes to see, but without doubt entirely invisible to most participants.

I'm sure most of those who attended the conference would recoil in horror at the use of terms straight from the Thatcher vocabulary to describe their politics, their historical perspective, and their class analysis. But it's difficult to see how traditional socialists could continue to fight their corner, and maintain their power base, without a Thatcher to "struggle" with. Thatcher and such socialists have one thing very much in common - namely their absolute mutual dependence, based on a social and political outlook which both sides claim to inherit from the reign of Victoria. Statist, centralist, authoritarian, confrontational, and centred on traditional relations of male power, these socialists are nothing if not establishment.

Their perspective is certainly rigorous. I found myself admiring its proponents for their tenacity. As one of some 40 Green Party members who attended the conference as individual socialists, I had expected to hear lip service to environmentalism, token mention of the quality of work, passing references to the Third World, an occasional caveat about the resource base. But no. These and many other elements of contemporary political concern were almost totally absent from speakers and floor contributors alike. All jobs and all services were to be "defended" with no external criteria whatever applied. Only the "struggle of the working class" constituted real political action, and many speakers publicly denounced their more theoretical comrades: there was no need for thought, it was time for action. All evidence, I felt, of the extraordinary tenacity of purpose, the absolute commitment to a faith which makes me reluctantly admire the likes of Arthur Scargill, Norman Tebbit, Eric Heffer and Margaret Thatcher, and understand the power they have over their respective followings.

But their talk has increasingly little relevance to people today and - more important - increasing numbers of people actively reject the labels and the analysis. Despite evident and sincere compassion, such socialists seem blissfully unaware of the changes taking place around them. Ironically, Britain's north-south divide serves them well: we find them dug in behind their northern barricades, awaiting the consequences of a siege to the death. What matters far more to them than a political solution (the defence and rebirth of socialism) is the perpetuation of a power base for the dominant and very male leadership (the defence of Labourism). I went expecting to hear - even to participate in the

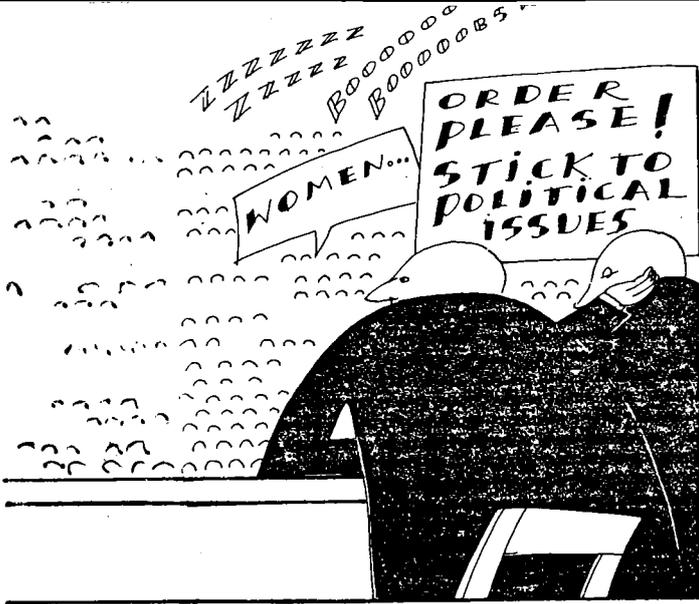


shaping of - a new and socialist response to the challenge of these terminal years of the millenium. But the overwhelming message of the conference is that Labour needs more of the same old politics, that the answers to today's problems and to the problems facing the Labour party and movement are to be found way back in the past. As they see it, the problem isn't so much that Kinnock & Gould have taken the wrong initiative: it's that they have taken any initiative at all.

This contrasts with the quite different, more progressive and radical thinking taking place today, mainly on the periphery of the Labour and socialist movements and in the Green movement, and the strategies that are emerging from it. The historic contrast of the hour is not between hard left and soft left, but between Labour left and the Green alternative.

If what was said at Chesterfield suggests a fossilised mentality, a betrayal of socialism at the deepest level (for socialism is nothing if not a message of liberation for all people at all times), what was left unsaid is true cause for despair. Partly, however, we must blame other groups for not making their voices heard. With economics such a major consideration in all the debates, it must be reckoned one of the minor political tragedies of the year that The Other Economic Summit and the New Economics Foundation made no attempt to contribute to the debates.

But left to their own devices these union leaders, MPs, councillors and others saw fit to pass a weekend in political debate with little or no mention of the Third World (abroad, or the Third World increasingly evident in this country), economic growth, resource depletion, trade inequalities, consumerism, or the question of land. They ignored the fact that the working class is a diminishing phenomenon; that people increasingly refuse to identify as working class; that working class men are increasingly inclined to vote Tory, or that women are



increasingly voting Labour; that in our patriarchal society and economy, men as individuals as well as a class are the net beneficiaries of women's disadvantage and oppression at work and in the home, in this country and abroad; that many workers believe themselves to be the beneficiaries of the capitalist system (which they are, while their worker and peasant counterparts in the Third World are those who suffer). No one asked how welfare could be provided on the basis of a shrinking industrial base and a declining national taxable income; nor did they examine the desirability, indeed the necessity, of a process of de-industrialisation and the creation of new economic indicators.

Nor was there any doubt as to the political objective in sight: "struggle". One Labour veteran, Ernie Roberts, denounced co-ops: you couldn't unionise co-ops, there was no basis for struggle. In one impassioned moment he said it all. Workplace politics, yes - but in the workplace only of a few. The working class identified by speaker after speaker was almost exclusively male: no mention here of women's work in the home, no reference to the unemployed except as potential workers, the complete exclusion of the self-employed, and an underlying abhorrence of alternative working practices. Any Green who went along to find just how much of the alternative economics these socialists have taken on board would have had no difficulty in reaching an answer: none. It wasn't apparent that any thought had been given to economic questions for some decades. Does all this really amount to the grassroots, 'Bennite' politics of the Labour left with which Greens are so often urged to sink their differences, and behind whom we are called upon to mobilise?

Any sort of radicalisation of Labourist socialism in response to the issues raised here will pose the profoundest threat to men's power bases on the left. I went to Chesterfield expecting a debate about socialism. Instead I found a very different agenda: the defence of what I can only call "Labourism". Quite why, as a politically motivated man, I had so little in common with most of the other socialist men at the conference, was something I could only begin to explain in terms of sex roles and my own expectation of what it means to be a man. After years in the green movement, where sexual politics is often said to be too low on the agenda, I now found myself in an environment where women's rights were on everybody's lips (the men just couldn't stop denouncing the Alton bill) but the reality of feminism was just a mirage on a receding horizon. Despite my own lip-service to it, I had often wondered what nonviolence could really mean as a political strategy: at Chesterfield I learned that nonviolence, like violence, begins at home. Here was a political strategy that actively sought

confrontation, that created enemies if none could be found, that exploited the psychology which also justifies the cold war, that offered a perfect justification for belligerent response, and where the mentality which provoked the Falklands War was quite at home. Nonviolence may not be quite the same as pacifism... it is in the initiatives we take that we must be nonviolent, in our modes of discussion and relating. Whether in extremis we would use a gun or a club is another matter.

I have vivid and abiding memories of the Saturday night rally and entertainment. Memories of Rebecca Johnston calling for the liberation of women from domination by men, lukewarmly applauded. The jolt as a black South African miner came on stage, fist in air, and announced himself a striker: men leaping to their feet, fists waving, cheers and whistles. The fanatical applause for the North Staffs Miners' Wives Choir - yes, these were really right-on women, fighting as wives for their men's jobs, worth more fists in the air (a woman at another meeting mentioned that in the pit closures many women lost their jobs too, but the wives knew better than to water down their appeal with that little detail...) After all, as the stand-up comic told us with a greater feel for the truth than he realised, politics is all about balls. One after another, bona fide political causes (apartheid, women's liberation, the pit closures) were being redefined in terms of men's roles and male sexuality, without anyone seeming aware of what was going on and despite exuberant sincerity and good faith.

Tony Benn and Eric Heffer defended the use of class politics in their closing speeches. Their attempt to re-define the working class as virtually the whole of the population (everyone who isn't a capitalist) was too absurd to take seriously. I doubt if anyone found any real meaning in such a suggestion. Yet it was the only response to the critique of exclusively class-based politics that I heard. A more careful listening to the applause which different speakers received, and a feel for the temper of many of the meetings, would suggest that increasingly large numbers of those attending were only paying lip-service to the old cliches and the ranting, while not daring to think in new and more open ways for fear of psychological and political reprisal. Two people close to the organising machine behind the event, and whom I had better not name, asked me how on earth the next Chesterfield conference could involve the Green Party and keep out the Socialist Workers' Party. It's a rhetorical question: they can't. The saddest thing I learnt was just how much intelligent people like Tony Benn are dependent for their visible (and audible) support on this reservoir of old-fashioned, reactionary, pot-bellied men, almost half of whom were not even members of the Labour Party.

Perhaps the green movement will provide a home for increasing numbers of socialist discontents, a place where socialism can be reinterpreted as a concern for all people, not just one group composed largely of men, and as a power base for the community as a whole, not just a tiny competing male elite struggling for leadership roles for themselves and a perpetuation of the patriarchal base of society at large.

All this was Labourism, not socialism. A chink of hope remains. There is at least an opening for dialogue and discussion, neither of which took place to even the slightest degree at Chesterfield. Maybe space can be made for it at the recall conference planned for May. On the present showing, and discounting the mainstream of the Labour Party (where Gouldism has replaced socialism), such dialogue coupled with a strong commitment by Greens to basic socialist principles, may constitute the only possible hope for socialism and radical politics in the present millennium.

WHAT HAS happened to our food? These are the ingredients of a current brand of oxtail soup: 'modified starch, dried glucose syrup, salt; flavour enhancers monosodium glutamate, sodium 5-ribonucleotide; dextrose, vegetable fat, tomato powder, hydrolysed vegetable protein, yeast extract, dried oxtail, onion powder, spices, flavouring; colours E150, E124, E102; caseinate, acidity regulator E460; emulsifiers E471, E472(b); antioxidant E320'. Additives rule OK! And inevitably so: the food manufacturing industry cannot do without them. If flavours were banned from foodstuffs, half the industry would disappear; and this soup would taste of what it really is - a technological version of gruel.[1]. Meanwhile the food technologists - with their chemistry sets - continue to have lots of fun at our expense. Who could possibly eat such stuff? But millions of us do - just glance at the contents of the nearest supermarket trolley. And when people speak out publicly against our dangerous national diet of saturated fats and sugars, and in favour of fresh vegetables and fruit, they make little headway against an all-powerful food industry that holds sway over governments and their 'health' policies; and if embarrassing truths threaten to surface as to how the whole system operates, then out comes the ubiquitous Official Secrets Act.

Take for example the question of additives. Processed foods are ideal commodities, flavoured, coloured, and 'preserved' for a long shelf life: fresh food is a nuisance - it goes off! And there's less profit in it - a chip makes more money than a potato, a crisp even more, and a crunchy waffle more still.[2]. Flavour and nutritional content get largely destroyed in processing, so these have to be put back in - hence monosodium glutamate, and spray-on vitamins. Colourings, however, are the real villains: a coal-tar dye such as amaranth (E123) is banned in other countries including the USA and USSR because it is suspected of being carcinogenic, but is permitted here: in fact without it many soft drinks would apparently resemble Duckhams Motor Oil.[3]. Tinned peas are painted brilliant green (E142), sausages are painted red (128), kippers dyed brown (154); an attempt by 'crabby continentals' to ban this brown stain and 'turn the British kipper white' provoked a patriotic outcry - the Eurocrats were trying to get at our traditional British additives! Much food is painted to resemble the coloured packaging, 'toy food' with day-glo colours aimed at children: what is being produced is not so much food as fantasy. "Our business", one additive manufacturer has said, "is to help the man in the street by providing colours which are safe and which help to give him a more interesting quality of life." Perhaps Reagan gets mental, as well as physical, nourishment by chomping through painted jelly beans. Yet every coal-tar dye now permitted in

our food has at one time been officially under a cloud as a possible health hazard.

Take also the question of bread. It has long been accepted that white bread is grossly inferior to wholegrain bread: the inner part of the grain used to make white flour and white bread is poor in vitamins and minerals, being almost entirely protein and starch. The milling and baking industries, however, have always preferred white bread for several reasons, not the least of which being the fact that it holds more air and water! In the 1940s, the brown National Loaf came into its own as a cornerstone of government food policy: Britain wanted a fit

# Food! Glorious food!

I'd like half a pound of anything you have that doesn't contain tars, resins, pesticide residues, polysaturated fats, artificial sweeteners, foaming agents or chemical additives



populace to make war, and afterwards to replenish the workforce and reconstruct the country. The millers persisted, and continued to lobby for white bread, which began to be 'fortified' with added vitamins and minerals in an attempt to 'prove' that it was as nutritious as brown bread: they won the day in the mid-1950s when the government abandoned its commitment to the brown loaf, and the price of white bread began to fall, so that it once more became a principle part of the staple diet of the population - as in the late 19th century, when the urban poor were sustained by bread and jam, tea and sugar. Since those days we know much more about nutrition, yet this knowledge, and all the campaigns waged by concerned people, have

little real effect on what people consume in the way of food. Why is this?

The giant food manufacturing firms and their food technologists determine what we eat and the choices available, and their power and influence are all-pervasive. Firms like Unilever can buy and sell whole governments; they finance conferences, sponsor research, provide the 'experts' who produce the scientific reports on which decisions on food and health policy are made: for every expert who casts doubt on nutritional standards, another 'expert' can be found to assure us that all is well, in the best of all possible worlds. Dissenting voices are branded as 'leninists', 'extremists', 'food terrorists', 'militants of the anti-sucrose left'[4]. The devious machinations of national food policy are concealed by the Official Secrets Act; more independent investigations, such as produced the controversial NACNE report, are suppressed if they reach embarrassing conclusions.

In his book 'The Politics of Food', Geoffrey Cannon has shown that 248 (about half) of the advisors chosen to sit on the government's food and health committees have links with the food empires whose products may come before them for safety approval. Three members of the Food Advisory Committee - which assesses the safety of food and food additives - are paid employees of Unilever, Colmans, and Heinz. Dr Francis Roe sits on the DOH Toxicity Committee, investigating the health risks of caramel food colours - and is a paid consultant to the British Caramel Manufacturers Association! He has denied that there is any 'conflict of interest'. (In a similar fashion, Mars actually funds research into tooth decay.) In a closed society like this one, the nuclear industry investigates nuclear accidents, the police examine police conduct, and the food industry takes a long look at itself and decides that there is nothing for us to worry about. Despite the occasional scare - like the link between food additives and hyperactivity in children, or spina bifida and the lack of certain vitamins and nutrients - the politicians in general acquiesce: in the last parliament, 250 MPs had connections with the food industry.

One of these was Margaret Thatcher, who used to be a food scientist, and worked for Joe Lyons in its Cadby Hall factory in Hammersmith from 1949-51. One of her tasks was to devise Swiss-roll fillings! Her speciality was 'fat extension', and she wrote a paper on the 'elasticity of ice-cream', the idea being to see how much air can be pumped into ice-cream, through sophisticated use of additives, before it collapses.[5]. Since I learned this, Swiss-rolls and Mr Whippy have never seemed the same! All this sort of activity illuminates the secret of capitalism, which has less to do with 'materialism', than

dreams and fantasies.

Sugar illustrates this very well. For thousands of years sugar seems to have been unknown in Europe, and by the Middle Ages was still a rare luxury, consumed only by the rich, or used as a medicine, a preservative, or a spice. When the Europeans looked to the New World for their empire-building, they were initially seeking places where sugar-cane could be grown. Owing to the labour-intensive nature of the plantation-system, sugar became one of the great demographic forces in world history, bringing millions of Africans to the West Indies, Indians to Fiji, the US to the Philippines, and the Portuguese to Brazil where they began the first destruction of the rainforests. The British began to set up their own large-scale sugar industry by invading Jamaica in the 1650s: the Empire was built on slavery, and the slave-trade based on sugar. By 1650 sugar was still consumed only by the rich, but by 1750 the poor were putting sugar in their tea, and by 1850 everyone was hooked on the stuff: it had become part of the staple diet of the urban poor. Nowadays in the West the consumption of packet sucrose is declining, though as fast as consumers stop buying it, manufacturers respond by putting sugar back into processed food. Nevertheless it does seem as if sugar consumption here is static, and indeed it must eventually fall, but the sugar industry isn't too concerned - not only can unwanted sugar (and fats) be dumped on poor countries in the form of aid, but there are fresh worlds to conquer: the East is ripe for Coca-colonialism, the spread of Coke and Pepsi (basically sugared water) - the Chinese, for example, each eat less than 10lb of sugar a year. This is the President of Pepsico International: "We're only just beginning overseas. We are in Russia with 15 plants. China has a population of 1.2 billion, India has 711 million - you know what I'm saying. It's all out there!"[6].

So sugar was a luxury that became a necessity, but traces of its 'luxury' status remained, a sign that capitalism, despite the misery it was bringing, was seen to be somehow enriching people's lives with 'treats'. Thus was established the first link between the will to work and the will to consume, between 'convenience-eating' and the factory system: and as the people as a whole became more impoverished, so the use of 'drug foods' increased dramatically - sugar and tea, coffee and chocolate (and tobacco) became the 'consolations' of capitalism; and also, "sugar and other drug foods, by provisioning, satiating - and indeed drugging - farm and factory workers, sharply reduced the overall cost of creating and reproducing the metropolitan proletariat."[7]. Ever-expanding consumption seems to bring an insoluble shortage of time, as if time itself were a commodity, to be swiftly consumed -

a high-energy 'hot' society like ours is thus fuelled by animal protein, saturated fats, and sugars. With the advent of fast-foods, eating itself becomes desocialized, and the traditional meal structure dissolves - the snack prevails over the meal. Interestingly enough, this is an example of how the social conservatism of our era becomes eroded by its economic liberalism - conservatism promotes the myth of the traditional family, which is nonetheless steadily undermined by being broken up into individual consumer units - choice and preference prevail over consensus. (Unfortunately this is true of our radical politics as well.) Of course all these 'choices' are ultimately trivial - the choice, for example between eating a Bounty Bar or a Mars (of which 3,000,000 are consumed every day) - or spurious, like the choice between different brands of margarine, the bulk of which are all made by the same firm (Unilever). In the meantime, the really important choices, over our own lives, continue to diminish.

But this fast-food, high-energy society is itself addictive, which helps to explain why people on the one hand are obsessed with health issues, and at the same time are prepared to shrug off such concerns as part of the price we must pay for a high-risk way of living - life in the fast lane! This is also why Lord Marshall of the CEBG can get away with ridiculous assurances that there is less risk from nuclear power than from crossing the road. And if we do get ill from eating the wrong food, there is the immense 'cure industry' out there to help us - expensive therapies for the rich, cheap medication for the poor, and endless profits for the drugs companies. (And bad food and bad drugs are linked in an even more sinister way - they are all based ultimately on animal experimentation.)

However enlightened we may be, our 'consumer power' will at the moment have little effect: unwanted food, like unwanted drugs (and unwanted weapons) will simply be dumped on the 3rd World; and 'pressure-group' campaigning will remain blinkered unless we reject the free-enterprise system itself. In the meantime the issue of the pollutants in our food is one which Greens must take as seriously as any campaign against the more visible pollution of the environment, and so put pressure on governments to check the depredations of the giant transnational firms. And slowly we must 'reclaim' our food - which is much too important to be left to the food industry.

BARRY MAYCOCK.

See Geoffrey Cannon: The Politics of Food. £14.95.1987. Century Hutchinson Ltd. Also: S.W. Mintz: Sweetness and Power. Penguin. £3.95. (References: 1:Cannon p83.2; ibid.p17.3; ibid.p181.4;ibid.p100.5;ibid.p300.6;ibid.p152.7;Mintz p180).

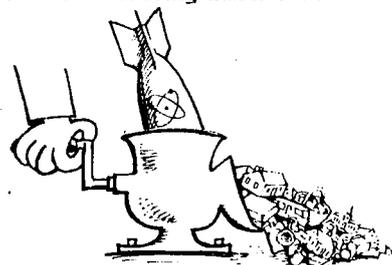


## PERSUADE AND SURVIVE

The times are a-changing. As **CND** frets about falling membership amid a general sense that the **Peace Movement** is losing its way, it is at the grassroots yet again where the new movement is slowly discovering itself.

**Southwest Ploughshares** have produced a beautiful and gentle reminder that opposition doesn't necessarily mean the sometimes macho posturings of mass rallies, blockades, night time chases and courtroom dramas - necessary though these may be. In **Break New Ground**, Sue Brown and Mallen lead the reader into the experiences of helpers on a **Tools For Change** project in Devon and Cornwall that used the gathering and refurbishing of old tools to highlight the link between military spending and under-development.

What comes through from the recorded comments of the participants is the sense of empowerment and meaning in the process of touring small towns or



the digging action at **RAF Mawgan** in Cornwall before the tools were finally sent off to Eritrea. For **Southwest Ploughshares**, **Small is Beautiful**: you take just a few people and talk face to face to only a hundred passers-by in a day (a far cry from Hyde Park). But rather than consumerist protests where we reassure ourselves that we are "us" and they are "them", **SW Ploughshares** sought to cross barriers and persuade.

As the authors conclude: "Our assumptions throughout **Break New Ground** are based on the conviction that this is the way forward for the peace movement; that real change will come only when we have made a lasting impact on the hearts and minds of ordinary people."

Doesn't that make sense to you? To be sure, read **Breaking New Ground: Practical Ways Forward for Peace Groups** yourself. It's available at £1.25 (p&p not inc.) from **SW Ploughshares**, 2 Rosebery Rd, Lipson, **PLYMOUTH PL4 8SS**, who will also organise workshops on the issues raised if asked.

• JERRY SPRING

# Going Multilateral?

BARRY MAYCOCK

'THE TIDE IS TURNING!' announces the latest CND leaflet, cheerily; let's hope this doesn't prove to be premature, like the fatuous Alliance slogan, 'the time has come!' The same leaflet also presents us with the two stars of the 'Mikhail and Ronnie' show, grinning and shaking hands and looking like men from the mafia about to clinch a deal: amazingly, this unedifying spectacle is offered to us for our approval! This is certainly a curious reversal of roles: CND is usually the most trenchant critic of superpower machinations, but this rosy view of events seems to accept the prevailing orthodoxy at its face value, promoting the two leaders as 'peacemakers'. Perhaps the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize already beckons, as our heroes follow in the inglorious footsteps of Begin and Sadat. But what is really happening is not so much 'disarmament' as a gradual sea-change in US policy. It's like a game of chess: deployment of Cruise and Pershing is used to polarise public opinion in an anxious Europe and help entrench right-wing governments in power (a process in which the peace movements have unwittingly participated); their withdrawal may well be similarly used to ease western Europe towards its own nuclear alliance (including West Germany) and a subsequent Eurobomb, a bulwark against the Soviet Union in Europe - leaving the US free to pursue its global designs, with the help of sea-launched Cruise missiles, and laser and space weaponry. And yet we are still invited to celebrate the INF deal (as a triumph of the 'multilateral' process) and the part the peace movement has played in bringing it about!

During the current campaigning lull, and the clear sense of an era ending, a new 'realism' has begun to emerge in unexpected places, causing a good deal of anger and confusion. Joan Ruddock at the Labour conference suggested that Trident could be used as a bargaining chip in future arms negotiations; and a CND spokesperson on Radio 4 blurred the distinction between 'unilateral' and 'multilateral' nuclear disarmament policies as not dissimilar means to the same end. This is 'realpolitik' with a vengeance! Perhaps they are all signalling that CND would not kick up too much of a fuss if Labour watered down a strictly unilateralist policy for a less contentious 'multilateralist' one, closer to that of a new centre party. If CND itself intends to be flexible on this issue, this would represent a colossal failure of nerve. Unilateralism isn't simply one way of helping the multilateral process along, but marks a radical break in policy, rejecting superpower politics and global power

games. So what is actually going on? What is apparent is a desperate need to believe in the INF deal, as a just reward for long years of hard campaigning. CND (according to the New Statesman a few weeks back) is tired; the activists are getting older (!). There are signs of a retreat from politics into the consolations of therapy, the garden and the allotment: the more 'workshops' take place, the fewer the demonstrations; the more 'networking', the less political action. Those that remain with the peace movement are in danger of being left behind, stuck in 1983, while history rattles along at its usual fast pace. Magazines like Peace News, with declining influence and dwindling circulation (soon to suspend publication for a while due to financial difficulties) give off a faintly musty smell, the air of old struggles and long-forgotten debates. What happened to the passionate arguments for and against mass NVDA? That particular struggle was won at the moment when it ceased to be of any significance: to rephrase Goldsmith's poem, 'CND recovered from the shock; it was NVDA that died!' NVDA has continued, in Cruisewatch and elsewhere, but there it owes more to anarchist direct action than to Gandhian civil disobedience: the idea that mass action of the latter kind could be mobilised round a 'single issue' has quietly disappeared - the Snowball has long since stopped snowballing.

The Cruise Resistance Movement will need to continue for a while; Cruise will still be deployed on exercise for a few months until the US Senate ratifies an INF deal. Cynics would again argue that such a deal merely clears the decks for the next generation of weaponry, which will itself be obsolete by the time it has been deployed, so that all we can do is exhaust ourselves chasing the tail of the latest weapons-system - only to see it disappear round the corner as soon as we come close! Cruise Resistance has been an inspiration, though it still seems to keep an astonishingly low profile - a friend of mine recently mentioned how difficult it had been to join, like entering the Freemasons: "is it a private fued?" he asked, "or can we all join in?" It now needs to broaden out into a more general resistance movement, rather than participating in a monthly rite - the ritual equivalent of hissing at the pantomime villain. Such 'resistance' will be more necessary than ever if NATO introduces more sea-launched weapons when Cruise and Pershing depart, and at the moment only Greenpeace is equipped for direct action at sea. But when I think of resistance movements, I think of those in Eastern Europe, for example, South Africa or South America; compared with those, of course, it

seems as if we are merely playing. Faced with these developments, single-issue campaigning of the old kind seems obsolete. Labour's defence policy is unconvincing, not because it is 'unilateralist', but because the consequences of a non-nuclear defence haven't been thought through to their proper conclusion: a new political role for this country, which would be non-aligned, with a fully international perspective, out of NATO, and prepared to form a new kind of alliance, with other non-nuclear countries. And such a policy has to be less Eurocentric - the real struggle is taking place outside Europe (in the Pacific, for example). Happily, this seems to be the direction of current thinking within CND (which will nonetheless continue to writhe uncomfortably within its 'single issue'). Both CND and END would now make more sense if they dissolved into a World Nuclear Disarmament (WNO?) organisation. As it is, no-one should underestimate the difficulties of shaping a new foreign policy - involving nothing less than a reversal of policies that have developed over centuries. Analogies with New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, are misleading: the comparison is more with a country like France - both Britain and France are faded imperial powers that would like to be 'great' again, and nuclear weapons are the figleaf that prevents them from feeling as if they were going (in Bevan's notorious phrase) 'naked into the conference chamber'. To expose this dangerous myth is no easy task, especially for the Left, as the Right is so adept at playing the nationalist card. But imagine Britain as a leading voice in an association of non-aligned countries! Perhaps the tide is indeed turning for such a policy - rather than turning instead in the direction of a new and dangerously unstable world order.

## HOUSEMANS PEACE DIARY 1988

Available now from shops at £3.50 or direct from Housemans, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 (add 40p postage). It contains the World Peace Directory: this year's special theme is War Resisters International, enquiries to 01 837 4473/4. Did you know that on Jan 2nd the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) was founded? That Bob Marley died on May 11th? And who was responsible for the words "he not busy being born is busy dying"? Peter Kropotkin? Andrea Dworkin? Of course not, it was Bob Dylan. And who wrote "sitting quietly doing nothing Spring comes and the grass grows by itself"? Tariq Ali? Bob Dylan? No, it was Fritjof Capra. All those things and more in the diary. A must for peace activists and Bob Dylan fans.



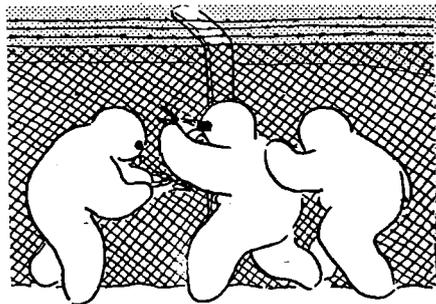
DECEMBER 2: Dunamis Lecture: 'The Impact of the US Budget Deficit', St James Church Hall, Piccadilly, 8.30 pm; Professor Susan Strange, Professor of International Relations at LSE.

DECEMBER 2: Malvern CND social evening, Malvern Hills College, 7.45 pm.

DECEMBER 5: Craft Fair, Sheffield Cathedral Hall 10am - 4.30pm. Admission 30p, OAPs 10p. Organised by One World Crafts, proceeds to CND, AAM, and WoW. Details: 0742.751 266.

DECEMBER 12: Erdington Peace Group Christmas social. Contact Peter Ford 021.382 3881.

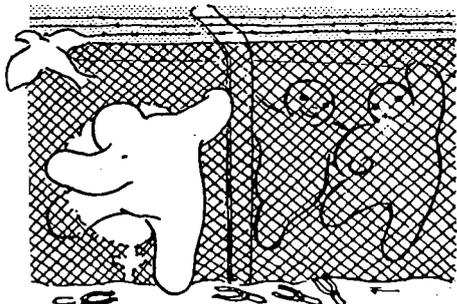
DECEMBER 12-13: Youth CND Conference, Manchester University. Contact Margo Sweeney or Clare McMaster, 01.250 4010.



#### GREENHAM WOMEN ARE EVERYWHERE

On December 12-13 there will be a Greenham Celebration with bonfires around the base at 8pm on the Saturday and 3pm on the Sunday. For further details contact: Portsmouth Women for Peace, c/o Portsmouth 829390

THERE IS now a new postal address for the camp: Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, Wood Gate, Burys Bank Road, outside USAF Greenham Common, Newbury, Berkshire. There is also a new bank account, called 'Greenham Women Are Everywhere', c/o Nationwide Anglia Building Society, Northbrook Street, Newbury.



WHERE AM I?  
HOW TO REACT TO INSIDERS  
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#### WHERE AM I?

"Class" again! Chris Hall's article confuses me. According to him I am working class; I don't own any means of production and "have nothing to sell other than [my] labour". However, in ordinary English parlance I am middle class; I live in a large comfortable house in a 'middle class' area, two cars etc., the products of long years of two good salaries.

Can somebody clarify all this, please, and tell me if it matters?

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#### REALITY OR 'REALITY'

Chris Hall (GL57) seems to have misread my article. A few examples would suffice. Firstly, I am taken to task for criticising the boycott of Barclays, Shell and South Africa when what I actually talked of is the idea of a general boycott of all cash crops, with the clear implication that boycotts more limited in scope can have an effect. It is the boycott as a strategy to destroy capitalism that I dismiss, not its use as a tactic.

Secondly, nowhere do I criticise people who "take to the street or picket line where there is no alternative", nor those who face arrest and the truncheon as a consequence of their opposition; but rather the tendency to define opposition as the consequence of facing arrest and the truncheon, and the performance of ritual actions (the Snowball campaign, token blockades, Stop the City, and Bash the Rich marches come to mind). I recognise of course that real opposition - or the desire for it - is generally intertwined with the false. That is to say: in one, reality leads to the truncheon whilst in the other, the truncheon leads to 'reality'.

Thirdly, those in power in Russia and America have so much in common precisely because of "the historical processes which brought both states into existence" and which now define their common interests: the maintenance of the global capitalist economy and all that entails by way of controlling and policing their respective workforces. Of course they have their differences, just as there are differences between power in Britain and France, Wales and England, city and country. As Guy Debord writes:

"the struggle of powers constituted for the management of the same socio economic system is disseminated as the official contradiction but is in fact part of the real unity - on a world scale as well as within every nation."  
*Society of the Spectacle*, para.55)

In short, Chris Hall has either criticised an article that doesn't exist or misunderstood one that does!

Andy Kaye

#### HOW TO REACT TO INSIDERS

Leigh Shaw-Taylor (GL56) wishes to hear from anyone with "real" information about the cause of the radiation levels around Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station and then says BNFL employees or their agents need not reply. Ignoring his having said he wants information "either way", surely this knowledge is better obtained from those on the inside - or has he never heard of deep throat? I know two people who work at Trawsfynydd and they do not have two heads, just a different opinion to mine regarding nuclear power. Leigh's 'evil empire' type of rhetoric does our cause no good, particularly at local level.

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#### VOTE SHARING: AN ELECTORAL STRATEGY

After the General Election, 'The Regionalist' magazine carried an analysis of the Green Party election results from a regionalist perspective. In the concluding paragraph, the author wrote: "It is indeed a mystery why the Greens have not sought a dialogue with the nationalist and regionalist parties with a view to electoral pacts where neither are able to contest all available seats. Instead, the Ecologists opposed Mebyon Kernow and the Wessex Regionalists in 1983, and in 1987 stood for the first time in Orkney and Shetland where the two movements for autonomy are even more overtly conservationist than Mebyon Kernow or the Wessex Regionalists."

It is indeed a mystery. What difficulty would there be in arriving at some policy deal? Most, if not all of the parties in the regions are already sympathetic to green ideas. Area Green Parties should have no problem in accepting policies of regionalist parties to promote the autonomy of their region, or even undertaking to get policies for the autonomy or independence of their region in to the Manifesto for a Sustainable Society.

An electoral pact would increase the number of seats that could be covered by candidates, either green or committed to working with greens for decentralisation and the environment. If the pact was high profile it could combine the votes for both parties in each seat. For example, ballot sheets could read "Green Party supported by Mebyon Kernow" or Mebyon Kernow supported by Green Party". Such an initiative can only come from people in the Area Green Parties.

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## BASICALLY WRONG

Adam Buick (GL57) asks "would the proposed [Basic Income] scheme work, at least within the present system?" He then goes on to argue that various consequences would follow its introduction. In this he is probably right, given his two invalid assumptions: 1. that the Green Party proposes to introduce a full scheme overnight, and 2. that it is not in fact part of a package of proposals to alter "the present economic system" - proposals which would invalidate his arguments.

On 1. he ignores our proposals for progressive introduction of the scheme. We fully recognise that total collapse of the "economy" would be counter productive and so the whole scheme cannot be introduced overnight, even given widespread support and understanding of Green ideas at the time.

On 2. his criticisms presuppose the aim of maintaining the present system of capitalist employers and employees as the dominant means of production and distribution. This is emphatically not our aim, and the effects which he sees as damning the scheme to failure are in fact its strengths. They would promote his



own aim, which we share, of "production...geared directly to supplying needs...[to] arrive at a steady state society."

The Basic Income Scheme would do this through giving the individual the "economic sovereignty" to accept or decline (capitalist type) employment, because basic needs were secure, whilst at the same time and for the same reason making self employment and co-operative ventures much less risky and more attractive. It would remove the imperative to "maintain jobs" as a prime requirement of "the economy", taking precedence over all others - in fact, to maintain jobs at all.

"Where is the money to come from?" Here Adam is spot-on but wrong in seeing this as dooming the scheme to failure! We aim progressively to tax away unearned incomes, and to make economy of resources financially attractive by progressively higher resource taxes, tailored for each resource to perpetuate its availability. In the context of our aims, we see no disadvantage in the fact that the scheme would be "a subsidy to employers", allowing "minimum wages to fall to zero. There is at present a wholly false gap between worthwhile work done voluntarily, unpaid, and the minimum wage acceptable for paid work.

In short, our aim is to transform

the present economy. The scheme can be regarded as "the wages of the machine" - meaning that since technology has relieved us of much of the burden of production, through the accumulated effects of the efforts and inventiveness of previous generations, so the population as a whole should share the benefits of this. Hence we should not be so dependent on employment for our incomes.

Much has yet to be worked out and agreed on how to achieve our aims, but the broad outline is agreed within the Party. Whether the eventual system should be called capitalist, socialist, or something else, is beside the point. But Penny Newsome (also GL57) is right to be opposed to the "whole superstructure of speculation in shares, the Stock exchange, and so on", the last of which I would define as the whole system of usury. This is something yet to be seriously addressed by the Green Party.

Adam has failed to follow through the implications of introducing the scheme along with the rest of the Green party's economic reforms. Equally, he begs a host of questions in his proposals for a Free Access Scheme. I can see no way by which this could be introduced overnight, without extensive totalitarian rules and regulations - and even then it would be near impossible, and inconsistent with his proposal for self-assessment of "reasonable needs". Yet, in his brief piece on these proposals, he does not even hint at any transition stage. Has he any proposals for this?

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## A POTTED HISTORY, PLEASE!

I have read with interest the recent letters in GL regarding the use of cannabis. There appears to be a lot of debate as to its value and position within a green society. As a user of the herb for spiritual reasons (I'm a Rastafarian), I can see no reason for the continued bias against it by the majority of 'straight' society when the flagrant abuse of alcohol and other legal drugs continues. After all, it's just a little plant we're talking about here, isn't it?

Because of all the response in GL, perhaps someone could write a feature on cannabis, giving an unbiased account of its history, botany, uses and effects. [Anyone offering please? Ed.] I feel by doing this, the readers of GL will have a better understanding of what cannabis really is and perhaps it will help to dispel some of the rumours about it.

Dave McCrick  
[address supplied]

## OWNERSHIP WITHOUT CAPITALISM

I would like to suggest that the recent debate over greens, socialists and new economics (GL51,53 & 57) has at least served to establish one area of agreement. As Penny Newsome (GL57), states: "It is not helpful to attribute to people opinions they do not hold". Further, it can also be insulting. I apologise to Penny for not realising the form of socialism she advocates, but in defence would like to point out that she didn't attempt to make her own position clear till GL57. Accusing the new economics of being infiltrated by the New Right or of being welfare capitalism in disguise simply sidetracks a potentially worthwhile discussion. It only reveals Penny's failure to understand how the new economics would seek to bring green and socialist ideas into practice.

The thought I continue to ponder is whether a society with private, worker and social ownership can be divorced from its historical capitalist superstructure involving exploitative competition (the nature and logic of which was most valuably analysed by Marx).

As the Schumacher quote given by Penny suggests (GL57), this can depend on the scale of the enterprise being considered. "In small-scale enterprise, private ownership is natural, fruitful and just". Unqualified, that seems an optimistically naive statement to me. Nevertheless, the question of scale is a vital consideration, along with ensuring that wealth is fairly distributed, promoting non materialistic attitudes and enabling morally guided actions not to be out competed.

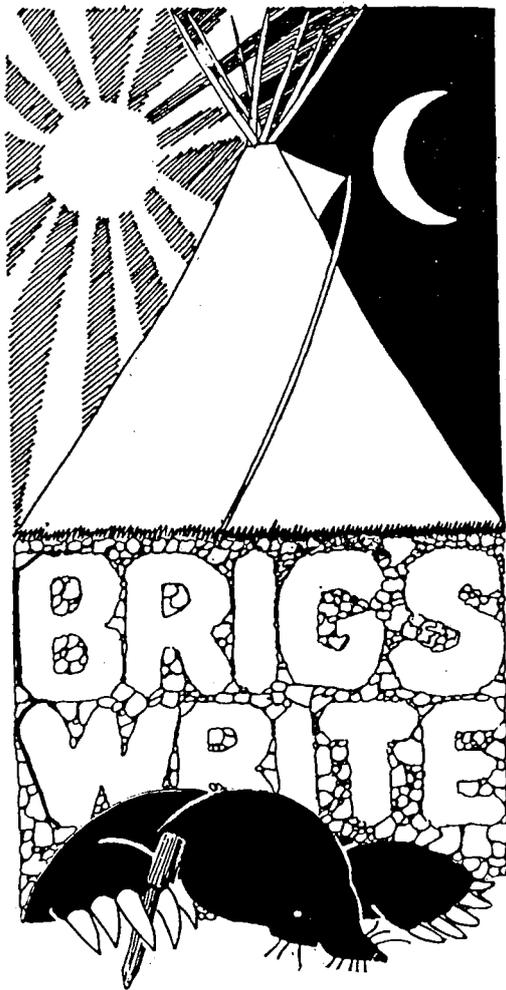
The work of TOES (The Oher Economic Summit) has so far led me to think that appropriate private ownership can be divorced from exploitation, so allowing greens to claim that they can be 'neither left nor right but in front,' and allowing sane, humane and ecological progress without some of the major defects of conventional socialism or capitalism.

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## GREEN LINE'S GONADS

Despite your long standing editorial stance against sexist language, I find in GL57 two snippets headed respectively "Green Line Balls" and "Huntsmanballs", though neither seems to have any connection with spherical objects of any sort. In future, could your collective please keep their balls to themselves? I really don't want to read about them.

Brig Oubrige



SO HAPPY IN GAOL  
 - BEG PARDON!

AMONG THE latest names on our petition is that of American Indian women's leader Janet McCloud, who I met in London recently. Janet, of the Northwest Indian Women's Circle, was on her way home from meetings with various native American support groups in Europe. She had come to highlight the case of Yakima elder David So Happy and 11 others of his tribe imprisoned for fishing their traditional tribal fishing grounds in the Columbia River.

The Yakima people's fishing rights were enshrined and protected "forever" under treaties with the US government, but have now been abolished under a new federal law. It is bad enough that this law deprives the Yakima of their traditional subsistence livelihood, but even more disturbing is the apparently racist way in which it is being enforced. While white, commercial scale fishermen have received only fines and 30-day or suspended sentences, the Yakima have received sentences of up to five years.

David So Happy is an old man in his seventies. He is serving five years, and since beginning his sentence has suffered a stroke and is now partially paralysed. To obtain his release, the Yakima and their supporters are petitioning Reagan for a presidential pardon. Letters of support should be sent to R.Reagan, White House, Washington D.C.

## THE MONEY WEAPON BACKFIRES

AS REAGAN and Gorbachev meet to sign the long awaited INF deal in the shadow of the fallen stock markets, it is a good time to reflect on the economic consequences of the arms race.

For many years it has seemed to be part of the strategy of the Pentagon cold war warriors to use the cost of the race as an economic weapon to bankrupt the Soviet economy. This tactic has certainly been at least partly successful; there can be no doubt that the economic strains at home have been a major factor pushing the Russians towards a deal. However, it is ironic that similar pressures are now also acting on President Reagan: the arms race has proved to be a double edged weapon economically, and this has exposed a major flaw in the Pentagon's reckoning.

It was always assumed that the US economy - the biggest and strongest in the world - could afford however much arms spending might be necessary to bring the USSR to its knees. But with the insatiable demands of the arms lobby pushing Reagan's accumulated budget deficit over a trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000,000!), it has been America which has cracked first. It is Reagan and his potential successors who are now faced with a necessity to make drastic cuts in arms expenditure, and it is a fact which gives the greatest hope for further arms reductions and even the eventual scrapping of Star Wars.

The famous 'military industrial complex' will no doubt resist cuts in US military spending, especially in the lucrative field of Star Wars research. After all, it is only the new opportunities to make money on 'SDI' which have made any INF deal acceptable to the arms suppliers. We will surely hear plenty of the argument that budget cuts will lead to a 30s style depression and even that it was only rearmament for World War II that got the world moving again then.

Such arguments are of course fallacious. Not only is arms spending the least efficient way of boosting an economy (because huge spending produces relatively few jobs in comparison to house building or other socially useful investment); Greens should also recognise that a further world recession is, at least in part, a good thing because it buys time for the planet.

- Depressions can be good for you

It was at the start of the 1970s - after the expansive boom years of the 50s and 60s - that we first began to hear grim scientific predictions of the consequences of mounting pollution and dwindling resources. The oil price rises and the 1980-1 recession slowed down the rush towards ecological disaster, and without these brakes our present situation would surely be

that bit worse than it already is.

Another slump - and particularly the very deep one that now seems likely - is an unplanned and haphazard way of conserving resources and reducing pollution. Without the extensive redistributive measures which the Greens advocate, it is bound to hit the poorest hardest. Under free market conservatism it will be the most profitable economic sectors which survive, rather than those which are most socially useful. nevertheless, in terms of global survival, any conservation is better than none. If we cannot regard the slump as a mixed blessing, we should at least be prepared to see it as a mixed curse.



## TIPIS: SIGNS OF HOPE

CLOSER TO home, the Save the Tipi Village Campaign is showing the first signs of success. Dinefwr District Council is beginning to waver in its determination to remove us from our land.

When the first three letters of support arrived, the council said: "We made up our minds on this three years ago." Since then, more and more letters have come in and we have presented them with the first 1,000 signatures of our petition. This produced a slightly different reaction: "Oh..." said the councillors, "perhaps we'd better talk to Dyfed County Council about this."

It is not just the petition which has begun to produce a change of heart. Local press coverage has concentrated on the £1 million which it would cost the council to rehouse us all, and Dinefwr now know that they (and the Welsh Office) face the added legal costs of our appeal to the High Court - a case which our lawyers tell us we should win.

Our petition is still going and more completed forms arrive by post every week from all over Britain. Networking is working wonderfully and at present there are at least four different home made versions of the petition doing the rounds - all with the same copied wording. We are well on the way to our second thousand names already, and more forms are available from 'Save the Tipi Village Campaign' PO Box 1, Salem PO, Llandello, Dyfed. Please enclose s.a.e.