



GREEN *Line*

**Paddy
Ashdown
talks to
Green
Line**

**Poll Tax:
revolting
prospects**

**Have a
green life
under the
trees**

GREEN *Line*

34 Cowley Rd,
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Telephone (0865) 724315

Monthly magazine of
Green politics and lifestyle

GREEN LINE is published ten times a year, and is produced by a collective based in Oxford. Green Line appears thanks to the efforts of Carole Guberman, Barry Maycock, Graham Hooper, Tim Andrewes and Jerry Spring. If any other readers can offer help of any kind then we are always pleased to hear from you. Phone Jerry on 0865 724315

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Normal rate 6, low/unwaged 5, voluntary hi-waged "supporter subscription" 10. The "supporter" rate helps build our publishing fund (we are all unpaid); and our thanks go out to all who have contributed as supporters. Overseas readers please add 1.50 to all rates (surface mail) or enquire about airmail rates to your area.

ENVELOPES

Whenever GL is printed with 24 pages we won't use envelopes so as to keep in the lowest letter rate. Please let us know if your copy arrives in a mess. If you want an envelope send 1 which will cover the next ten 24-page issues.

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5-9 copies only 50p each; 10 or more only 45p each - post free. Send cash with order first time, please; after that, if you want a regular standing order, we'll give you a month to pay. For special occasions like demos or big meetings, we'll supply you sale or return. Normally, however, we do not supply sale-or-return on monthly orders. Normal trade arrangements apply to shops etc.

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DEADLINES

The next issue is due out on MARCH 1ST 1989. We need all news, articles, small ads etc by 15th February 1989. In general all articles are read and discussed at a meeting of the collective in the middle of each month.

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Six recent back issues for 2 post free or 20 back issues for 5. Ideal for new subscribers. Please indicate which is the earliest issue you have already.

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VEGAN Community Project exists as a contact network between people who wish to live close to other vegans or to establish a commune.

Some projects underway and ideas for others need more support. Sae to E.Noakes, 36 Wimborne House, Dorset Rd, London SW8

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RURAL COMMUNITY with 17 acres (mixed ages, mixed-diet, mixed-gender) seeks new members. Send SAE for interesting details to Geoff, Membership Sec. Redfield, Winslow, Bucks.

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BASKET-MAKING, spinning, jewellery making (17-18 Feb). Choose your craft! The first of a full programme of events at Lower Shaw Farm including circle dancing, shiatsu, cycling, watercolour workshop, games, trees... as well as children's and women's events. Send SAE please to Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon 0793 771080. Low cost. Vegetarian.



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Whither GL...?

Dear Readers,
many thanks for your encouraging response to our request for your views (GL68). Please keep it coming and we will endeavour to meet your requests and criticisms.

Your letters fall into two classes: concerning the political direction of the mag; and concerning the balance between articles on ideology and more personal pieces.

Regarding the first issue, we naturally have our own ideological positions here in the collective and this is bound to affect our appraisal of the articles sent to us. Basically, however we are happy to include a diversity of opinion where it is well argued (see Paddy Ashdown interview, in this issue). So, if you disagree with an article, or you feel we are missing a certain political position, then please write!

The question of balance between personal and political again reflects partly the concerns of the collective and partly a lack of articles of personal experiences, reports of local initiatives, articles on spirituality etc. Again, we need your help. For instance, we hope to include a series of articles on local projects this year - so if you're in one or know of one then we'd like to hear about it please!

How to define green ideology

THE GL COLLECTIVE are right to nail their colours to the mast for the coming year - for a green movement that is "defiantly anti-capitalist and unashamedly of the left" (GL68). Those who argue for a green paradigm neither of the right nor of the left delude themselves. The green approach is not compatible with capitalism, whether of the market or of the state. Capitalists depend on growth to accumulate capital - growth fuelled by their exploitation of people and natural resources for profits. With that axiom, capitalism can only pay lip service to green concerns.

The green focus on need is essentially socialist. The axiom "from each according to their ability; to each according to their need" can be applied to ecosystems as well as people. William Morris appreciated that a century ago, when he advocated a co-operative, socialist society in harmony with nature. Later distortions of socialism by Leninist dictatorships or faint-hearted social democrats need not obscure that prospect.

In extending the green agenda as the GL collective advocate, we must take care not to be distracted by other groups with their own priorities,

whoever and however worthy they may be. The green agenda must be founded on principle and developed through debate as a coherent whole. Its components must be rooted in that wholw, not tacked on at the behest of some special interest group.

The articles in GL68 on the Single European Market and Northern Ireland illustrate that distinction. Tim Andrewes' piece, 'Unleashing the Euro-Beast', assessed the impact of 1992. He pointed out how a single market would marshal economic pressures against, or simply forbid, the adoption of green policies: for example, it would be illegal, to favour local production for local need. SEM is not just another boring piece of EEC economics; it is a political decision to sacrifice social and environmental values, and individual communities' political freedoms, to the apotheosis of maximum capitalist exploitation, profits and growth. A more fundamental attack on green values is hard to imagine. Opposition to SEM must lie close to the heart of the green agenda.

This though cannot be said of Steve Dawes' piece 'Can We Solve Northern Ireland's Irish Problem?'. He assembled a powerful argument for his preferred solution, namely British withdrawal and Irish reunification under international auspices. He presented this persuasively and urged the Green Party to follow others recruited to the cause. Yet the connection with green issues was at best an afterthought and the article read better without them! I hope the green movement will not rush to sink itself in the morass of the Irish problem. Many left-wing groups have policies on Ireland; all they have achieved have been bitter divisions and discouragement of activists working on central issues. We don't need that in the green movement! Our agenda should focus on green issues, not on the cause of Irish nationalism.

It may be argued that the green agenda will have to cover issues beyond that green focus. Indeed it will, eventually. But there is a long way to go, and we will get there no sooner by trying to sprint the first few miles: we are more likely to miss our direction and head down byways instead. The green movement needs to keep its focus on the central issues. The peripheral ones won't run away before we get to them.

John Norris
14 Clifford Rd
New Barnet, Herts

I TOTALLY AGREE that GL must retain the middle way between the 'radical ghetto' and 'conventional dullness', and also that greens must push ever harder to show the differences between conventional 'environmentalism' and truly radical policies.

It seems to me that a further issue requiring delicate balance exists in the necessity to pursue fundamentalist green ideals, while somehow becoming populist and convincing the great mass of 'unconverted' of the need for drastic change. In order to bring about

the "complete social transformation" to a green society we must first greatly increase awareness. Because of this, I feel that media such as the mag Environment Now can have an important role. Some of the things in that mag were/are indeed politically inept, but it was/is making many of the connections that have to be made. Change has to go on at all levels: GL does have a converted audience, whereas EN was/is aimed more widely.

My point is that, frustrating as it undoubtedly is, the process of "definition" of the green movement has to occur at different levels because of correspondingly differing levels of awareness in people: witness the gradual connections being made by, and consequent radicalisation of, the World Wildlife Fund. The key of course is to reach all those people and to define radical green policies before them without being absorbed into the safety valve of environmentalism.

Neil Judd
65 Pinnocks Way
Oxford

WELL FOLKS, WHAT are you trying to do? Wish us a Happy Christmas? "GL is the only public forum that exists for radical green debate" forsooth! What are you reading these days? Perhaps the postal service is playing up and you're not getting your copy of Fourth World Review; or was it just a bit of hype springing from nothing more than a momentary fit of absentmindedness that led you to claim such exclusiveness? On the other hand, perhaps you really do believe what you have said - in which case "poor you" and "what on earth can we do to release you from such a narrowly restricted view of the world"? Of course, we of FWR do not write from your perspective, but dare one suggest that lefty policies based on political theories emanating from the 19th Century are not likely to be of much help in solving the problems of the 21st? But one could be wrong.

However, what disturbed me more is the attitude you express towards your own writing: "Being lazy sods", to use your own felicitous verbals, "we'd rather write as little as possible". Dear me! If you're not driven to write with a total passion of conviction then - if only for the sake of our trees and the grim fact that the market is saturated with dead stuff already - why bother to write at all?

I ask for a reason which seems to me important, for your closing paragraphs are really little more than a tired old rehash of the New Statesman/Tribune stuff which we have already had the good fortune to see shown the door of history by an ordinary mortal called Common Sense who is also quite active in the Russian Empire just now. And the reason for these gigantic ideological erectile tissue-ups lies in the fact that people in leading positions prefer to wallow in simplistic slogans rather than do their homework on the real nature of the forces which are promoting the global crisis.

O.K. Push for your "complete social

transformation", whatever that may mean - but do stop to ponder why millions of ordinary working people vote solidly for capitalism in one election after another, and why millions of Russians would like to vote for the same sort of set up if only they could, before you finally decide that capitalism per se is the real enemy. But perhaps what you meant to write is "giant monster multinational and monopoly capitalism"? In which case, what a pity that you didn't and thereby demonstrate that your powers of discrimination have been so sharpened by the lessons of modern history that you are able to perceive clearly that the curse of our age is neither capitalism nor communism, nor liberalism nor Labourism, but the one disease that afflicts them all, and of course us, giantism.

John Papworth
24 Abercorn Place
London

Balancing personal and political

HAVING RECENTLY SEEN some copies of GL, I was very impressed by it as it is the only magazine I have come across which discusses the various issues around green politics and lifestyle without being totally propagandist. The kind of alternative culture which it appeals to has a wide variety of views based on a similar set of values. The majority of alternative publications specialize in only one viewpoint - whether it be political or social - which seems to make it exclusive from the rest and thereby takes it out of its world/environmental context. In this way, it is important to see political and social movements as part of a whole. Such a balance is the only way forward.

Alison Lock
52 Culworth Close
Leamington Spa
Warks

THANKYOU FOR ASKING for subscribers' opinions of GL. I might not have got round to writing otherwise. I have been a bit worried by my impression of all the articles being prestty heavy going - a bit doomdayish. I know it needs to be said, and I do generally read most of the articles before the month is up, but I remember reading GL from cover to cover all at once and finding a greater diversity of articles. Was it really GL that printed a two-part feature on someone's personal experience of natural birth? (GL29, Feb 1985). Somehow I've given up expecting that sort of article now.

I would welcome more personal accounts as well as factual descriptions of all the chaos in this world. Maybe it's only in the personal that it is possible to find hope these days. GL could do with a bit more hope. Friends have criticised GL for being too political - not in the sense of too extreme - but too unrelievedly political: all struggle and Third World plight and political action. Maybe I'm

beginning to feel that too...

Thanks for all the work though, and good luck with the new year.

Anna Ashmole
2 Salisbury Rd
Edinburgh

AFTER READING A dozen or so issues of GL, one can get the flavour of it and respond to your invitation to write in. There are very few causes or issues which appear that I am out of sympathy with but I most warm to the reader who thought (Letters, GL64) that lifestyle is heavily outweighed by the political in GL. This has a curious effect on the language so that the reader feels agitated by so much polemic: lots of drums are being banged but not much rhythm results. An uncommitted person might pick up the mag and think that there are a lot of big words on display and that although they can appreciate the usefulness of coded conversation among the aficionados, they are more used to digesting material presented to them in a variety of styles and speeds elsewhere.

For example, I am very committed to two special causes which my boss (a psychiatric nurse) calls my obsessions. One evening, a chance brought me into the company of a very worthy couple who were into almost every good cause imaginable, and I found myself being wound up emotionally into such a state that I was glad to escape. It reminds me of the stress people encounter trying to be jolly at Christmas. One is reminded that a goodly proportion of the readers of the quality papers first turn to the diarist or political sketch writer, or even to Steve Bell.

I don't say this as any form of carping criticism, but as an observation upon reading habits. Something quite laid-back, giving first-person or eye-witness testimony with no hint whatsoever of theory is often quite telling - and is likely to occur on the women's page as often as not. I have to confess I was trained to make the most of writers who were ruminative - philosophical even - like the farmer from France who pointed out that the quiet of the countryside was not really silence but a harmonious blend of many noises from birds and insects and wind in the leaves and distant lowing. An observation like that stays with you though controversies by the bucketful have been dispensed with. Yet nowadays, the talk is more likely to be about subsidies or salmonella. If the accumulated wisdom of sages could be gathered in a digestible form and passed on effortlessly from generation to generation, wouldn't that be something to make a song-and-dance about? A corroborree perhaps...

The Australian Bicentennial gave aboriginal activists the chance to demonstrate another way of telling; "a stage upon which we can be seen and heard around the world". Here in Portsmouth this happened literally: Jack Davis from Perth brought a play about urban life; dancers came from the Northern Territory; and two galleries

displayed contemporary and traditional art (try Josephine Flood's The Archaeology of the Dreamtime (Macmillan), for more on aboriginal culture, or Henry Reynold's The Other Side of the Frontier (Penguin) on aboriginal resistance to the Europeans).

"The government says that the land does not belong to us. But we belong to the land". You would have found echoes of this sentiment in Ireland and Scotland during the clearances, or from the mountain men in Kentucky faced by the Sheriff and the strip-miners' earthmovers. An aborigine walking on the seashore in the Top End waved his hand towards the sea: "That's my country". It is a land submerged, yet visible by satellite and still concrete in tribal memory. These people have a rich inheritance that puts one in touch with creative spirits such as the Kokotha's Sleepy Lizard Dreaming.

It would surely pay us to find out more about the earth's best friends. And we could do something to reassess the place of Myth and what we mean by myth. Or, to put it another way, people who have the future of the planet at heart, can best be served by those who are most at home with its past... those who seem to have been in on it at the start of the great adventure.

Gerry Oates
8 Campbell Rd
Southsea
Hants

I'D LIKE TO thank you for all the effort you the collective have put into providing me with an independent and outspoken green mag for the last 12 months. It makes a welcome antidote to the daily flood of misinformation from the establishment media. I like your coverage of both local and global issues, as well as your willingness to tackle difficult subjects such as Northern Ireland.

By way of criticism, I do find GL a bit faceless and impersonal. A bit more warmth and even humour would be a way of lightening the generally grim tone of many of the articles. I would like to think that humanity and wit is an important aspect of the green movement and could be an important weapon in the struggle against cold, calculating Thatcherism.

One other omission as I see it is in matters of green lifestyle concerning the individual (e.g. communities work, spirituality/religion, art, children, racism etc. These all seem to be largely ignored in favour of global affronts and animal rights, but I feel these areas to be of equal importance if we are to change the way people think and act.

Well, that's about it, except to say that I still miss Brig's Write. Couldn't he be persuaded to return to your pages?

Steve Long
The Cottage, Moor Road
Langham, Colchester

More letters on pages 23 and 24

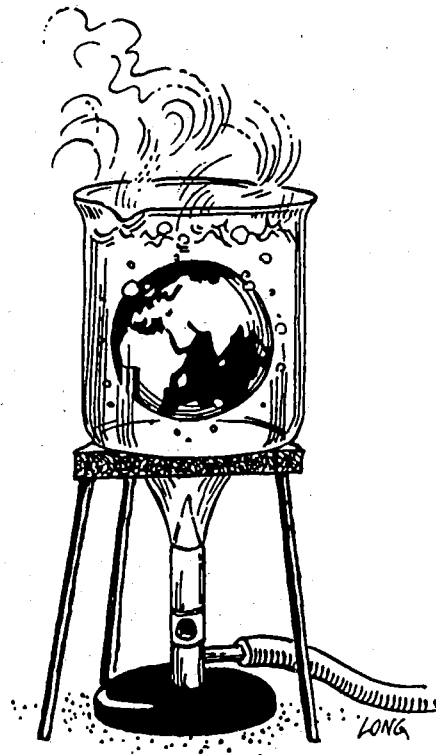
COOLING THE GREENHOUSE

IN DECEMBER, FoE published "The Heat Trap", a detailed report by the Climatology Research Unit - commissioned by FoE - about the Greenhouse Effect, its causes, and its likely effect on Britain and elsewhere. Copies of the report have been sent to all EEC heads of state and commissioners, each with a letter calling for immediate European-wide adoption of the report's recommendations.

According to the report, atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) concentration has risen by 25% since the Industrial Revolution and is increasing at about 0.5% per year. CO2 releases - from burning of fossil fuels and rainforests - CFCs, nitrous oxide and methane all appear to contribute to the Greenhouse Effect and their levels are rising. In fact methane - largely from farm livestock, particularly cattle - has a worse effect per volume than CO2. The Greenhouse Effect is happening now: the world has warmed by 0.5C since 1900.

What are the likely effects? According to the CRU's analysis, effects include a rise in global mean sea level, virtual extinction of the coniferous boreal forests of Canada and Northern Europe, hindrance of the productivity of marine ecosystems, droughts and floods, and decreased crop yields. In Britain, low lying areas would be flooded, many crops including cereals would suffer reduced yields (with more rapid disease and pest build-up) and destruction of many wild species and communities.

The report looks at how emissions of greenhouse gases can be controlled, and makes clear policy recommendations for European governments to follow - covering future EEC policies on energy, air pollution, transport, overseas aid and trade, and agriculture. Reducing CO2 emissions is the most important measure called for and the wealthy industrial nations are called on to reduce CO2 emissions by 20% of 1988 levels by 2005, and 50% by 2015. It also points out that nuclear energy cannot solve the problem



of global warming, and that future energy policies must be based on increased energy efficiency, energy conservation and the development of renewable technologies.

FoE have also produced a Global Warming Action Guide for those campaigning to stop the Greenhouse Effect. Copies of "The Heat Trap" (price 10) and copies of the Action Guide are available from FoE, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ.

SABOTAGING THE PRIVATISATION OF WATER

THE WATER industry is to be privatized this year. The vast majority of people are opposed to it, including many of those who did support the government's previous privatisations, yet nothing can be done in Parliament to stop it reaching the statute book. The likelihood of opposition being mounted outside Parliament is negligible, but even if there were protest, the chances of success are minimal. The trade unions in the water industry will doubtlessly be cowed or bought off like all the other unions in previous privatisations.

Water privatisation will lead to significant increases in water prices. In addition water users will have to bear the cost of installing

meters in every home and then pay a permanent and unavoidable rental for those meters, adding to the private water industry's profits. To those with jobs and incomes outstripping inflation, the increasing cost of water will be bearable, but to those on Income Support, which no longer includes an element for water charges, it will be very noticeable.

Underlying all this is the main reason for water privatisation: allowing property speculators and the rich to get their hands on the vast land assets (nearly 500,000 acres) held by water authorities. The Daily Telegraph Saturday magazine (14.1.89) has already gone on a gleeful safari around some of the pickings to be made.

But there is one significant difference between this and previous privatisations: the water industry has not control over its costs, and won't until those meters are working. If consumers were to use far more water than expected, it would significantly raise the industry's costs. Now wasting water is hardly ecologically right-on, but if a campaign could be mounted to scare off potential investors by threatening to bankrupt the new private water companies before they could even pay their first dividend then it might be possible to force the government to abandon the sale. It will be years before meters are installed. Can we get it together before then?

BOB FINCH

NEWS OF MARTIN FORAN

READERS OF GL66 may remember our report of the disgraceful treatment received by Martin Foran at the hands of prison officers in Walton Hall. He has since won a court case against them, but only received 750 compensation. Moreover, on return to Parkhurst, his rights to exercise and association with other prisoners were denied and he was forbidden to send copies of the statements made by the prison officers in court or photographs of his injuries to family and friends. He couldn't even show them to his wife Valerie during her visits.

Remember: this is a court case that Martin won! Clearly the authorities wish to cover up what happened - Martin's MP, Iain Mills, has been unable to obtain the photographs even after contact with the Home Office.

Since Christmas, we understand Martin has begun a hunger strike to protest at these latest injustices and to continue his fight to prove that he didn't commit the crime for which he was originally imprisoned back in 1985.

Send letters of support to Martin Foran C51796, H.M. Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5NX. Complain to the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT. The Martin Foran Supporters Group is at BM/FORAN, London WC1N 3XXTIPI

VILLAGE IN HIGH COURT

Members of the Rainbow Tribe living in Tipi Village in West Wales have suffered a setback in the fight for their community's survival (see GL62). They have been challenging the local council's enforcement notices for the removal of the teepees on a procedural technicality. But in the High Court the judge decided that although Dinefwr Council hadn't followed procedure, this hadn't caused "substantial prejudice" to the teepee dwellers' rights at the 1985 Inquiry into planning permission for the teepees. So the council's vendetta can proceed.

The residents first settled in the valley in 1976; the Village even has its own postcode; many of the residents are on the electoral roll. They claim that they do not need planning permission as their tipis are temporary structures under planning regulations which are moved at least once a year to protect the ground. But in August 1987 Mr Walker decided in favour of Dinefwr borough council, ruling that the tipis were permanent residences erected in breach of planning regulations. He decided that the scale of residential use conflicted with "the spirit of national and local policies for the protection of the countryside"; despite the fact that the whole ethos of Teepee Valley residents is to live lightly on the earth. They claim that Mr Wanker's decision was wrong in law and against the rules of natural justice.

The teepee dwellers intend to appeal and, if necessary, take the matter right up to the European Court of Human Rights. Hopefully, the enforcement notices will have to be reissued, giving the villagers another breathing space. At the original planning inquiry, the Inspector was broadly sympathetic to their case, but hamstrung by planning laws and his concern about future developments in the valley. The basic problem is the intransigent local council's refusal to accommodate the wish of these people to life in peace - in their own way.

Please send donations to Save Tipi Village Campaign, PO Box 1, Salem Post Office, Salem, Llandello, Dyfed. Write, politely, to Dinefwr Borough Council, Crescent Rd, Llandello.

...WHOOPS!

REMEMBER THE "Green Marx" picture in GL68? It was drawn by Tom Hickmore for the cover of "The Green Socialist Video". We forgot to credit him on it. Sorry Tom! The video itself is a compilation of Labour, Green and SEPA speakers from the 1988 Green & Socialist Conference. A useful way to kick off a meeting... Available from Take the Cake Productions, 26 Washington St, Brighton, E.Sussex BN2 2SR (0273) 672030

NETWORK



LOCAL news...LOCAL news...LOCAL news...

MORE GREEN PAGES

READERS and greenies in Herefordshire may be interested in Hereford FOE's "Green Pages" that has recently come out. It is a local alternative directory covering virtually everything from alternative medicine to wholefoods; there is even a section on ethical finance. It is available (2.50) from FOE Hereford, The Willows, Newton Lane, Leominster, Hereford.

DORSET TAKES THE LEAD

EAST Dorset Green Party has mounted a very successful lead-free petrol and car conversion campaign during the last year. We'll have a full report next month. Meanwhile, they can supply you with car stickers "Don't be to blame for a child's damaged brain" at 50p a time, or 25p each for orders of 20+. Part of the campaign has involved having a telephone advice line, called The Green Line, where callers can get information on how to convert their particular make of car to unleaded petrol. The number is (0202) 632313.

GREEN STUDENTS

THE Green Student Network has been in existence for a year now and is reported to be going strong. Its second gathering, at Leicester University late last November, brought some 20 groups together. The next gathering is to be at Newcastle Polytechnic on 10th-12th March. A programme is already set out and details of the gathering can be obtained from 320 Old Durham Road, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE8 4BQ. The GSN's second magazine - "Green Student" - is now out, at 50p per issue, 4 for 10, from Green Society, Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS1.

GREEN-TECH ON TYNESIDE

THE Tyneside Environmental Education Centre is starting up several projects to show that green, environmentally sensitive, co-operative business can work: a wholefood, organic bakery will be designed to minimise fuel consumption and use fuels such as processed wastes; a market garden will use organic systems with energy efficient glasshouses. The projects will be open to visitors rather like the A.T. Centre at Machynlleth. The organisers urgently need more helpers, so if interested contact Roger Haydon (091) 2760433, Nigel Wild (091) 2724635 or Monica Frisch (091) 4137972.

GREEN VOICES

CALL Huddersfield 661650, or write to 37 Upper Mount St, Lockwood, Huddersfield for the local green newsletter, carrying a mix of contacts, dates, green news and campaigns.

A new green group has also started up in Leeds. Leeds Green Action have produced a "Leeds Green Umbrella" magazine, a link between all diverse peace, green, Third World, etc. groups in the area. Contact: Leeds Green Action, c/o West Yorkshire Peace Centre, Vicar Lane, Leeds LS1.

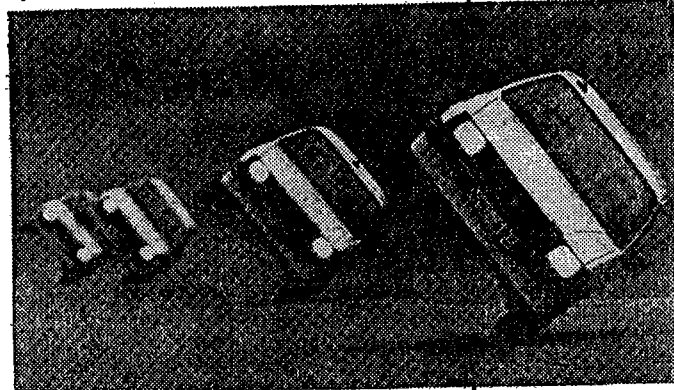
DIRECTORY UPDATE

Have you read the Directory for the Environment by Michael Barker? Monica Frisch is hoping to compile a Third Edition following the author's untimely death from leukemia last June. She would like feedback on improvements that could be made (e.g. scope, geographical coverage, detail of entries, arrangement of entries etc). If you can help, write to her at 8 Ivy Ave, Ryton, Tyne & Wear NE40 3PU.

CRUNCH TIME FOR HEALTHY SNAX?

MUESLI, cereal and fruit based bars have really taken off commercially in the 1980s, hailed as healthy alternatives to those nutrient-free dental destroyers, traditional sweeties. In 1981 the cereal bar industry was worth only 0.5million but in 1988 annual sales have soared to 48m. So far the market has been dominated by companies such as Jordans, Quaker and Fox's, with a large number of smaller firms, but now mainstream sellers of processed sugar such as Mars and Rowntree Mackintosh are muscling into the market. Mars' new cereal-filled "Ballisto" bar is expected to become a 50 million brand.

But just how healthy are these alternative snacks? Ana Sagues and Melanie Miller have recently been investigating them for The Food Magazine (Spring 1989) and have found that they do not live up to their healthy image, being too high in sugar and fat and very low in fibre.



Department of Transport officials demonstrating Paul Channon's latest wheeze for fitting an extra lane onto the M25 without increasing public spending

TREE SPIRIT

GL has received news of a group dedicated to buying land and planting it with native trees to counter the destruction of our woods and forests. For more information, write to Tree Spirit, Hawkbatch Farm, Arley, nr. Bewdley, Worcs. DY12 3AH

GOING FOR A MEAT-FREE LONDON

LONDON Vegans' newsletter continues to provide info about what's on around London for vegans, animal rights campaigners and greens generally. The Christmas issue included a thoroughly researched attack on meat eating and the fast-food chains by Ariadne Morais. Send an sae for more on their newsletter and info services at 7 Deansbrook Rd, Edgware, Middx HA8 8BE.

Another new group, Sheffield Vegans, has apparently been started. Phone (0742) 683865 for details.

GREEN MEDICINE

THE New Year issue of the East London area mag Green Umbrella has a useful supplement of alternative health practitioners, including everything from acupuncture through magnetic therapy to yoga. Sae to them at 34 Quebec Rd, Ilford, Essex IG1 4TT

Looking first at fibre: despite being often described as "high fibre", the bars investigated had fibre contents between less than 1 gramme and 5.6g per bar, failing to meet the Government Food Advisory Committee's recommendations that bars can only be labelled "high fibre" when they contain more than 6g of fibre per bar.

Sweet nothings

Sugar contents varied between 27% and 48%. Often the sugar is there in healthy-sounding disguises:- raw cane, soft brown, muscavado, glucose syrup, corn syrup, lactose, dextrose, molasses, honey. Dried fruit and fruit juice also contain high quantities of sugar. Carob is often touted as a healthy alternative to chocolate, yet one carob bar contained 47% sugar - more sugar than traditional chocolate bars.

Calorie contents of cereal bars were around 76 to 150kcal per bars; fruit bars tended to contain many more calories. Although fruit bars are smaller than Mars bars, their calorie contents weight for weight can be the same.

Fat contents for cereal bars averaged 18% and the percentage of calories from fat ranged from 27% to 48%, of the Mars bar where 35% of calories come from fat.

Along with high sugar, high fat and low fibre levels come low nutritional information. Although some - usually smaller - companies will put nutritional information on the wrappers, many manufacturers are reluctant to give details even when they were asked.

The Food Magazine is published quarterly by the London Food Commission, 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9AR. 2.50 per issue; subscriptions 12.50 individuals/ small

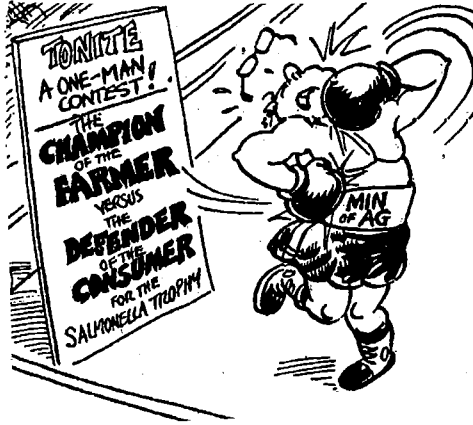
LESSONS OF THE GREAT EGG SCARE OF 1988

THE EGG scare provided one of the most revealing spectacles in years of government mendacity and corporate power at work. What can we learn from the demise of Edwina Curry (and numerous Salmonella poisoned human beings)? First off, it shows just how important it is for anyone challenging the Establishment to get their facts absolutely right. Coupled with media distortion ("most eggs are contaminated" rather than Curry's "most production is contaminated"), the mere possibility that Edwina was eggsaggerating, allowed the food poisoners, and the odious Kenneth Clarke, to slither away from the real issue - the safety of our food.

A second point is that battery hen and egg production is now controlled by a few very large companies (did you know that Unilever is a major supplier of shit & corpse hen food?) - If it had just been individual farmers hit by falling sales, then I can't believe there would have been the same government support (e.g. the 'help' for shepherds after Chernobyl). Between 1979 and 1981 egg producers sweet talked MAFF into drafting an Animal Health Protein Processing Order to monitor battery production conditions, that went against the advice of the government's own health experts.

Third, the scare showed up the lack of information available to the public on health and food. This is particularly disgusting under this government because their only policy (dogma?) is that consumers should be given a wide choice so we can all revel in the game of free marketeering. Even disregarding whether we should have to make a choice between say carcinogenic or safe additives in the first place, often the consumer doesn't have enough information to make such a choice. Why? Because it's kept secret in the name of commercial confidentiality, or because a food label is left ambiguous at the behest of the food producers. It demonstrates just how contradictory MAFF is, as Gibbard's cartoon opposite so nicely shows. Faced with public fear, MAFF on the one hand tells us that there is no problem while simultaneously taking out adverts to tell us to Goodyear our breakfast egg (i.e. we're responsible for decontaminating a potentially dangerous

product). Until food policy is taken out of John MacGregor's grubby little hands, we can't expect any change - as is being seen with the current listeria hysteria, where sloppy regulations and enforcement allow supermarkets to keep cook-chill foods at temperatures that perfectly suit the incubation of bacteria!



A fourth lesson is just how difficult it is for us to extricate ourselves from the food producers' web. For instance, the calls for free-range eggs are distinctly problematical since many free-range hens come from the same battery hatcheries that have been contaminated with Salmonella and are fed the same contaminated recycled protein - check out those 'Salmonella Free' notices at your local store carefully. Clearly, the simplest course is to go organic vegan, but of course, in the free market paradise, you have to pay for the privilege of protecting your health. Farmers too, on a treadmill of capital intensive production, are also trapped by the technological "imperative" created by the R&D of the agrochemical industry: move with technology or go out of business.

And the final, and most crucial, lesson is that MAFF must be made to ban all punnable foods; then we'll be spared any more of those eggscrutiating yolks.

JERRY SPRING

Thanks for info to DAVE ROBERTS

SALMONELLA RESEARCH

ONE NEWS item during the egg scare was the probable closure of a government Salmonella research project in Bristol. "How could they! And during an epidemic!" You wall. It's not so simple though: the actual study is into Salmonella resistant chicks; in other words, to help the likes of GoldenLay avoid facing the fact that factory farming, apart from being immoral, has within it the seeds of its own destruction. No wonder the government reckoned that industry would be keen to take over the project!

GREENS GROW IN BATH

A RECENT by-election in the city of Bath has shown just how potent green politics can be, given hard work and good organisation. In the marginal ward of Walcot, where only 70 votes separated Labour from Conservative, Green candidate Derek Wall upped his vote from 11% last May to 23.5%, beating the Democrats and coming within 3% of Labour, who were defending the seat. The Greens fought their campaign on issues of homelessness, transport and health, canvassed every night for five weeks and won huge support in council estate areas.

Asked whether the Green Party wasn't just helping to split the anti-Tory vote (the Conservatives actually won the by-election), Derek poured scorn on the idea: "Over the last two years, the Labour vote has halved while the Green vote has more than doubled to within 150 of the Conservative vote. We are now the only party capable of beating the Tories next time."

RAPE VICTIM CHARGED

News just in of a demo at 2pm 9th Feb outside Old St Court, London. A Hackney woman, and several others are charged with kidnapping her ex-boyfriend. However the police have not seriously investigated her claim that she was raped and regularly assaulted by this man when she couldn't force him to leave her home. For more info write to Hackney 11 Defence Campaign, C/o Liberty Hall, 489 Kingsland Rd, London E8 4AU

network compiled by GRAHAM HOOPER

GREEN DIARY

FEB 3-5: Activities for Under-14's teacher training weekend at Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys SY20 9AZ

FEB 7: Public Debate: Water Privatisation & the Environment. Yorkshire Water Authority vs Clean Rivers Campaign and EYE on the Aire. Leeds Civic Hall, 7.30pm. All welcome, free.

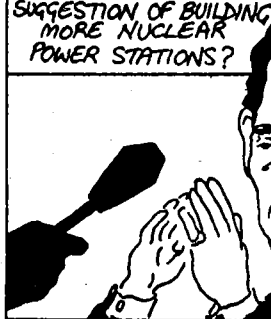
FEB 18: Anti-Nuclear Network against nuclear power conference, National Planning Meeting: Action Against Nuclear Power, 10-5pm, Jacksons Lane Community Centre, Archway Rd London N6, opposite Highgate Tube. Accommodation by prior arrangement, crèche, veg. cafe, disabled access. Discussing direct action particularly, privatisation, nuclear waste dumping, PWR programme. Further info contact ANN Box 30, 187 High Rd, Wood Green London N22.

FEB 18: Green Day. Leeds University Union, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS1, 11am-5pm. Talks, workshops, local & national speakers. Issues explored include Nicaragua, animal rights, green spirituality, greenhouse effect, Kirkstall Valley campaign, local conservation, crises in North & Irish seas, rain forests, energy privatisation, nuclear power & alternatives. Free. Details: Adrian Wright, 14 Kelso Road, Leeds LS2 9PR, 0532 430188.

IN VIEW OF YOUR IMMENSE INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES...



...WHAT DO YOU THINK OF NICHOLAS RIDLEY'S SUGGESTION OF BUILDING MORE NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS?



THEY SHOULD BE SORT OF TRADITIONAL, NEO-GEORGIAN, BOW-FRONTED, DUTCH, GABLED...

FEB 18: Greens Student Network. Meeting to finalise a "Plan of Action" for a Northern Region Network. Leeds University Union, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS1. All Student Green groups welcome. See also Network. FEB 24-26: Solar, wind and water projects for schools. Teacher training weekend at C.A.T. (see Feb 3).

MAR 3-5: Getting the message across - communications skills for green activists,

at Unstone Grange nr. Chesterfield. Contact John Button, 10 Union St, Kirkcudbright DG6 4JF (0557) 31587

MAR 8: International Women's Day

MAR 10-12: Greens Student Network Gathering. Newcastle Poly. See Network.

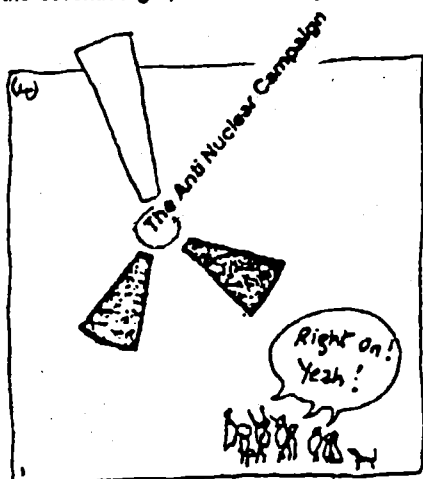
What else is happening? If there's an important or interesting green event happening in your area why not let us know.

Last December, GRAHAM HOOPER went to a meeting of alternative technologists. Here's his report

WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY BUT WHERE'S THE COMMUNITY?

THIS WAS ONE THEME that reared its depressing head at a conference "Community Technology or Corporate Technology?" early last December, organised by the Network for Alternative Technology and Technological Assessment (NATTA) and the Centre for Alternative Technology.

The idea of Community Technology (CT) was mooted in the seventies and is all about decentralising the control of energy and other technologies (e.g. a village/community/ neighbourhood controlling its own wind turbines, biogas plant, manufacturing workshops etc.) From a green point of view such democratisation and devolution of technology is certainly desirable, but how far has this brainchild of the seventies got, fifteen or so years later?



Well CT hasn't really taken off and although there are a number of CT-oriented groups beavering away, their work appears to be centred around energy conservation and domestic insulation. More about why later, but first some news of some of the activity that has been going on.

Brian John of the Newport and Nevern Energy Group told the conference about NNEG's apparent success since its founding in 1980. Initially they organised talks on energy issues, stressing the positive aspects of renewables, but soon moved into bulk supplying of insulation materials and strawfuel briquettes, recycling, organising "energy shows", giving energy advice to the public and eventually

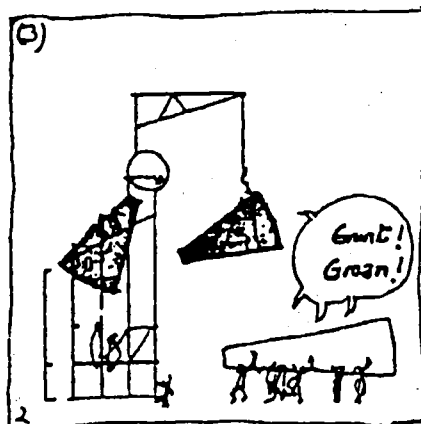
PASSING KINGS CROSS?

For the latest books and mags on ecology, anarchism, animal lib, gay and peace, pop into Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, 01-837 4473 (we also do mail order)

persuading the local authority to get some energy policies, including an anti-nuclear policy, into the County Council Plan. They have been somewhat hit by the ending of the Community Programme which lost them their CP workers, but they are struggling on as best they can with volunteers. They have been remarkably successful, partly because of determination, a lot of goodwill from the local community, ability to move with the times and successful use of the local media.

Brian, with his 'Energy Parks UK Ltd' hat on, also talked about the proposed setting up of an energy park on the site of the disused Shell oil refinery at Milford Haven (land recycling!). The project would have had two components, an energy park showing off a variety of renewable technologies (primarily wind power) and an exhibition centre, with cafe etc., to attract tourists in need of enlightenment. The site had useful facilities for possible connection of the energy park to the National Grid. Energy Parks UK had support for the project from a number of wind turbine producers, the local electricity board and even the CEGB; unfortunately Shell pulled out of the scheme, depriving it of its site.

At a larger scale than CT, regional energy plans are starting to come into fashion. Charmain Larke of the Cornwall Energy Project has been working on an Energy



Action Plan for Cornwall, initiated partly as a result of the Green Party getting a seat in Cornwall's County Council. Cornwall is pretty well off for wind energy with potentially 1.5 gigawatts of harvestable power - that's about three times Cornwall's maximum energy demand. Other renewables looked into during research for the energy plan were wood, solar collectors, hydro, energy from wastes, farm slurry (ethical dilemma here; could be helping battery farming) and hot dry rocks (mostly inconveniently sited over the environmentally sensitive Lands End peninsula).

The Energy Action Plan, which is currently being finalised, will set a target of an 11% reduction in energy consumption between 1986 and 2000 (over and above reductions through normal levels of energy saving and insulation), with renewables taking up 10% of energy needs.

Incidentally, one interesting snippet that came out of Charmain's talk: Cornwall is strongly anti-nuclear yet most of their electricity comes from nuclear stations.

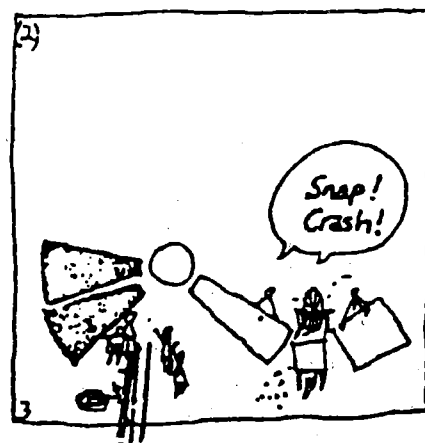
Back to CT's apparent lack of progress. Peter Harper of CAT and Godfrey Boyle of EERU pointed out that the notion of community had been somewhat lost. Over the centuries - and more rapidly in the

Thatcher years - all social units between the nuclear family and the nation state have been eroded and marginalised, and whereas many years ago most of the production and consumption of energy and commodities was done at the village/community level, nowadays production is at the mass level for consumption by individuals and families (e.g. CEGB's energy, Unilever's food, Nissan's vehicles). As Peter Harper explained, loose-knit communities can organise social events such as fetes but do not get it together for more serious economic activities, which end up being done by private enterprises or by a local authority.

Peter also pointed to another thing that the alternatives movement seems to be losing: the notion of voluntary simplicity. He found this to be true even at the CAT. Can we be a self-reliant community in hi-fi, fridges and home computers?

Problems... and success stories

There were some echoes of Peter's talk when Godfrey Boyle talked briefly about the abortive Greentown Project that was to be built in Milton Keynes. Greentown was to be a village that would use renewables, energy conservation and CT ideas. Among the obstacles that eventually killed the project off, were the loss of will to develop the community initiative in the the 1980s, and that the group couldn't get the "head of steam" needed to overcome all the difficulties.



Nevertheless Godfrey cited some positive CT projects elsewhere. The Lightmoor project in Telford - similar to Greentown - has succeeded, with the backing of the Town and Country Planning Association, the three local authorities and Prince Charles. In Denmark two projects were mentioned: Zvind is a high school and teacher-training college served by a 2MW (1MW actual) wind turbine built by its staff and students; the village of Esponobel gains its energy from heat pumps, solar collectors, wind turbines and straw burning as a back-up. The Kibbutzim in Israel can also provide some good examples of technology controlled by the community. However, in summing up, he said that there should be a conscious effort at devolving political power to the local/community level. If this happens, CT could well take root here.

Elsewhere in the alternative technology field there is some progress. Wind power is being tried out by the CEGB (Carmarthen, Orkneys), and, with privatisation of energy, there is likely to at least be talk about

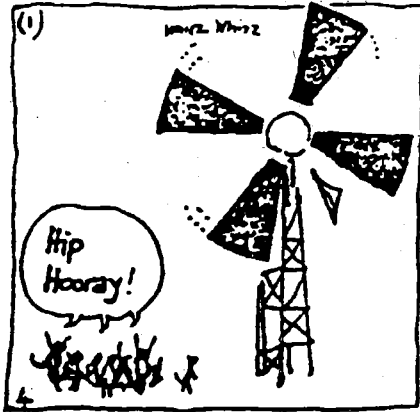
renewables. But here we are talking large scale renewables, with big boy operators accountable only to a few.

Dave Elliott of NATTA suggested that we could be on the verge of a wind power boom. This raises a few hard questions. We could end up with forests of badly placed wind farms operated by cowboys, like what has happened in California. There, wind turbines are put up more to harvest tax concessions rather than energy and only 10% of them are any good. Although wind energy has quite a lot going for it, including the potential for small and community scale use, it can easily become another centralised, large scale, undemocratic operation with massive turbines made by huge companies to whom they are just another high tech product alongside the guided missiles and whatever.

To Dave Elliott it appears that we have little choice but to engage with corporate powers if we are to influence the direction of renewables, which begs the question of how to do this. Maybe by revamping the CT idea, with less stress on community control, to make it acceptable to corporate bodies? Buying shares in the post-CEGB electricity companies and raising the renewables issue at their AGMs was also suggested.

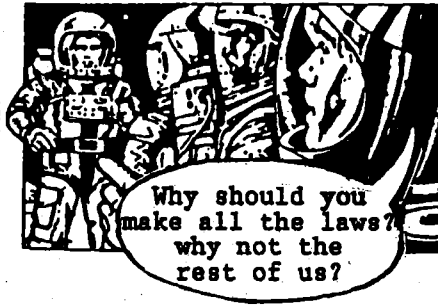
There were some hurried workshops on some of the conference's themes. There was some consensus on the need to do things at the appropriate level, the need to network and disseminate information so that the various small projects can be used as models, and the need to make use of the many "friendly" journalists in the media.

I left the conference with mixed feelings. Surprisingly, the spirit of enthusiasm is still there, although perhaps dulled by the years and lack of progress. It certainly looks like renewables will become more accepted but most likely in the mainstream large scale, commercial systems such as will be offered by the sons/daughters of CEGB. It is likely to be as alternative as tinned vegetarian sausages at the supermarket. If the CT



dream of the seventies is to ever be made anything like reality, there needs to be a massive effort at rebuilding local/village/neighbourhood communities as strong functional units that can act together for much more than just jumble sales and parties. Indeed, rebuilding real communities and devolving political power from national level to local level will be very worthwhile for lots of other reasons that we greens can think of, not just control of our power supplies.

NATTA can be contacted: c/o Energy & Environment Research Unit, Faculty of Technology, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, Bucks



Green Peace News...



PEACE DIARY

FEB 8: Ash Wednesday peace witness. March and vigil at the MoD Whitehall, London. Prepare for nonviolent civil disobedience.

Contact Christian CND at Underwood Street, 01.250 4010.

FEB 11-MARCH 4: Edinburgh Peace Festival. Details: Ray Newton (031.556 1083).

FEB 11-12: SCANN Conference, Portsmouth. Plenary topics to include: 1989-1990 Campaigning, National Disarm the Seas Network, Resource sharing and funding, National Disarm the Seas demo (?). Contact SCANN Conference, c/o 119 Orchard Rd, Southsea, PO4 OAD, or contact 0705 811603 or Graham on 0705 817688.

FEB 12: West Midland CND Peace Concert with Paul Tortelier, 2.30 pm at Birmingham Town Hall. Tickets 3-13 from WMCND, 54 Allison Rd, Digbeth, Birmingham B5 5TH (021 643 4617).

FEB 23: The Merits of a Nuclear Defence Policy. Bruce Kent and Sir Anthony Buck MP. 7.30pm at University of Essex Lecture Theatre Block. Details 0206 863211.

FEB 25: Counting the Cost: Changing the Balance. Dayschool on the social consequences of nuclear weapons, 10am-5pm in Doncaster Womens Centre. Contact John Brierley (0422 883927).

APRIL 1-9: Central America Week.

APRIL 2: CND London demonstration. Details in next month's Green Line.

TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS: SCANN AND CND

A SUCCESSFUL protest action by SCANN (South Coast Against Nuclear Navies) Portsmouth towards the end of last year is described in a recent SCANN Bulletin:

"On December 15th last year the SCANN/Greenpeace protest at the return of the nuclear-armed air craft carriers Ark Royal and illustrious was significant and quite remarkable. And yet the number of protesters was ludicrously small. I counted 19 humans and one dog on land, and 9 brave souls at sea. No more, no less. But on Thursday December 15th the anti-nuclear message was presented to more people on the south coast than ever before. Back in October, our hugely successful Portsmouth rally attracted 2,000 protesters, and was crudely dismissed by the gutter press, gently relegated by the broadsheets and squeezed into 120 seconds of comment on radio and a total of 3 minutes on television. In comparison, the Ark Royal protest resulted in a superb media hijack. It attracted 32 minutes of TV coverage on no less than 8 news bulletins, including the lead story on TVS (totalling at least 3 1/2 million viewers). It forced the Portsmouth News front page lead item to print the full sorry story of anti-nuclear protests during the ship's 'good will' circus to Malta and Australia. It succeeded in the first public naval admission by none other than Rear Admiral Peter Woodhead, cornered by a television reporter on the poop deck of the Ark Royal, that nuclear weapons ARE carried on board Portsmouth-based ships. The hapless Rear Admiral even invited us to "come and discuss the nuclear issue with him"! And it confirmed SCANN's importance in acting as a catalyst for the campaign for nuclear free seas.

The fact that the sea was calm as a mill pond on the morning of the protest gave Southampton-based SEA ACTION incredible manoeuvrability in its first action, and the two fast inflatable crews by Greenpeace veterans managed to buzz the 20,000 tonne vessel, despite the Royal Marines and police launches. A giant SCANN banner was draped near the harbour entrance, clearly visible to the ship's crew, press photographers and TV helicopters. And that is what struck me most of all: despite the great bulk of the carriers, despite the 1,200 sailors and their welcoming families, we made our protest clearly and effectively. How? Simply by turning up on shore, and taking to the waters in three tiny boats.

Since the launch of SCANN in the Spring of 1988 a new energy has been harnessed and a focus for successful action has resulted. Locally, nationally, and internationally within the peace movement, the nuclearisation of the seas has become a major issue. By forging close links with Greenpeace, and over fifty national and international peace organisations, and by succeeding in pushing our campaign within CND, 1988 was without doubt a major turning point."

IF THE SCANN action, in its defiance of the nuclear state, shows what can be done with 9 people and a dog, the forthcoming CND April event, in contrast, seems to have sprung from a children's 'demo concept' breakfast cereal competition: two human chains running from the MoD in Whitehall; one to the Overseas Development Agency; the other to the DHSS at the Elephant and Castle. Objects will be passed along the chain to demonstrate how resources should be re-allocated. This is better than just standing there with an embarrassed grin, because at least we are given something to do, perhaps in the way our primary school teacher kept us occupied with glue, scissors, and bits of string. Can you blame Autonomous Peace Action protestors getting

ANIMAL NEWS

Larson



PRIMATE Action was launched in April of last year, and is calling for a national DAY OF ACTION on APRIL 15th, its first birthday, in order to highlight the many issues surrounding the use of primates in research. A campaign leaflet printed by Arc Print (address below), must be ordered by the 15th March at the very latest. There are plans for press conferences in London and Glasgow, to raise issues including the total lack of legislation relating to the caging of primates, the biological hazards posed by research establishments and the negligible value of research using our closest relative in the animal kingdom. Boots, ICI, Unilever etc will all get a mention, as they are among the biggest commercial users of primates. The work of Collin Blakemore, the Institute of Psychiatry, and the connection between Shamrock Farms and the barbarous methods of obtaining 'wild caught' primates will also be discussed.

Enquiries to Arc Print, 265 Seven Sisters Road, Finsbury Park, London N4; and to Primate Action, PO Box 254, Brentwood, Essex.

AN International Conference, organised by the Athene Trust, in London last October, discussed the implications of genetic engineering on people, animals, and the environment. The following resolutions were agreed which had the full backing of those at the conference:

1. Calls for a moratorium on the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment.
2. Moves that genetically engineered living organisms and animals should not be patentable.
3. Calls for a ban on the transgenic manipulation of animals.
4. Stresses the necessity and urgency of a global debate to address the ethics, environmental, economic and social implications of genetic engineering.
5. The current practice of mixing milk and dairy products from cows test-treated with BST with the milk and dairy products of untreated cows be immediately prohibited.

AS predicted in the GL68, five members of the RSPCA Watchdog steering group have been expelled from the society. However, Watchdog is fighting back, and has applied for a judicial review of the case; it urgently needs contributions to the Watchdog Defence Fund (see address below). Watchdog will not be crushed, and will continue to increase its efforts for more democratic accountability within the society. Contact: 44 Kingsley Road, Horley, Surrey RH6 8RH.

HOW THE POLICE PROTECT LAW-BREAKERS

THIS REPORT has reached us from the SUN VALLEY 13:

On 6th December 70 members of the Animal Welfare Investigation Unit took part in an inspection of a poultry processing plant's transport arrangements. We stopped and attempted to inspect a livestock transporter containing 3000 broiler hens outside the gates of Sun Valley Poultry Limited in Hereford.

The intention was to obtain evidence of breaches of the 1988 Welfare of Poultry (transport) Order by photographing the hens in transit and exposing Sun Valley's usual practice of transporting sick and injured birds in appalling conditions.

Although police officers were in attendance in large numbers, having been informed beforehand from within the movement, we still decided to go ahead with the inspection on the grounds that we were not going to break any law, merely enforcing laws that were being broken.

The police saw things somewhat differently and as soon as the first crates were removed, began to react violently, arresting 13 activists, kicking and punching others, using police dogs to savage the crowd, and letting slaughterhouse workers attack those who were already handcuffed inside police vehicles.

Meanwhile the remaining activists carried on with the inspection, bravely refusing to be intimidated by violence in the hope of obtaining enough evidence to bring serious charges against Sun Valley. We believe that we now have enough to bring a prosecution against them and are awaiting a statement from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food regarding their intentions. Many birds were sick and dying, and we heard pathetic cheeping sounds from the 7 week old birds trapped in the centre cages. The crates were filthy, and we could clearly see crippled and injured birds being trampled by the few healthy ones. Many had sores and hock burns and we will be highlighting these facts in any court

case.

This will cost us a large amount of money and we desperately need donations to fund the prosecution. The 13 activists who were arrested were all charged with serious offences under the public order act (Section 4) and appeared in Hereford magistrates court on December 8th. After all the defendants had decided to fight the case, all the charges were dropped and we were allowed to make public statements in open court about the poultry trade in general and Sun Valley in particular. These statements were widely reported by local and regional news media. The price for this publicity, however, was that all 13 were bound over for one year to the sum of 300. None of us regrets our actions and I personally am proud to have been associated with all those who took part. Everyone showed that they were more concerned with the welfare of animals than their own personal safety and refused to react in the face of intense provocation by the police and slaughterhouse workers.

A defence fund has been set up to pay the considerable court costs of the 13 defendants and to fund if possible the exposure and prosecution of Sun Valley. Hundreds of thousands of birds die at the hands of these murderers every month and we hope everyone will support our actions by making a contribution to the Sun Valley Defence Fund, c/o P.O.Box 589, Bristol BS99 1RW.

NOTE: This information is taken from the CAW Bulletin (produced by Co-ordinating Animal Welfare at the above address), a publication which explores the problems of campaigning, and reflects current debate within the animal rights movement. For this alone, after only 4 issues, the Bulletin has become invaluable, while other AR magazines, in their task of exposing animal abuse, tend to remain chronicles of horrors, without discussing the kind of campaigning that can best get rid of them.

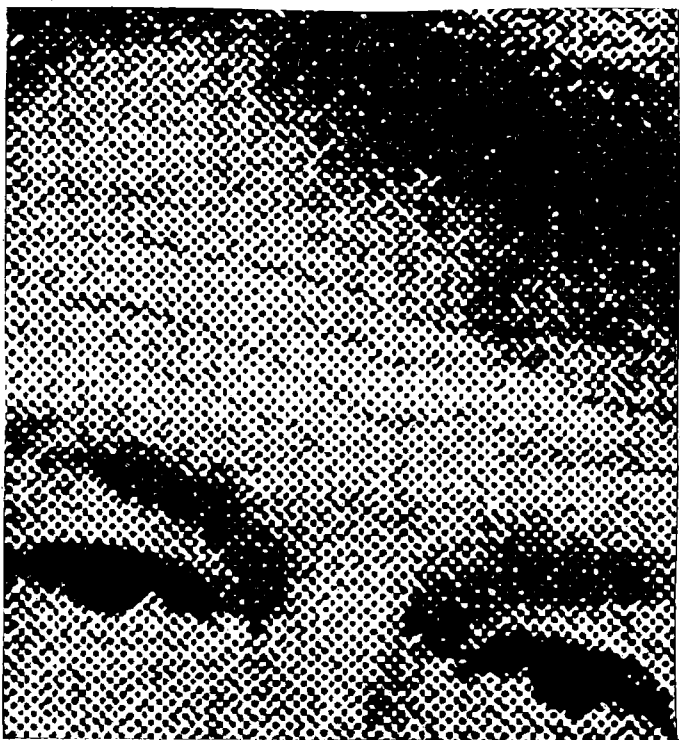
PRESSURE on the fur trade continues to build up: Cocksparrow Farm is in trouble. Once one of the largest Arctic Blue Fox Farms, with many thousands of animals, now it has less than a hundred. A day of action against the fur trade on FEB 4th, initiates a campaign culminating in a National Anti-Fur Day on NOV 11th.

With sales slashed by 50% since 1984 the fur industry is in terminal decline: now we need to push a little harder to finish it off altogether.

THE Marine Protection Group is campaigning for an end to the killing of Pilot Whales (and dolphins) in the Faroes Islands. Such a cull is no longer essential to the Faroese economy, and has virtually degenerated into a bloodsport, a macabre spectacle of ritual slaughter. The campaign needs support both practical and financial: to become an MFG supporter, and be kept informed of the campaign's progress, send 5 to the Marine Protection Group, 47 Avon Road, Bournemouth BH8 8SE. Tel (0202) 34700.

Back in GL26, MIKE BELL interviewed David Owen to search for signs of green thinking and found him knowledgeable on holistic health, ignorant on organic agriculture and boringly conventional on all things nuclear. Here he returns to Westminster to put some similar questions to the leader of the Liberal and Social Democrats, Paddy Ashdown.

Ashdown and the Green Agenda



MY PREVIOUS DEALINGS with politicians had taught me that afternoons get pretty chaotic and evenings impossible, so I had made my appointment for 10.30 a.m. This meant catching the 8.20 train from Cambridgeshire and in the rush I left home without my questions!

Ashdown's office consists of two rooms in the Palace of Westminster. As I entered the main office I was struck by the strange juxtaposition of half a dozen green computer screens and modern office layout on the one hand, and the wooden panelling and sense of history of the Liberal leader's office on the other.

After a short wait he called me into his spacious private office where I explained I had come as a representative of the green movement to find out whether the Democrats could be taken seriously. I said too that greens were increasingly sceptical of the sincerity of conventional politicians: the Alliance had made certain green overtures prior to the 1987 General Election, but during the campaign there was not much greenery about. What reason would anybody have to believe that the Democrats would be any different...?

There has been a quantum change in the nature of the new party - it's not just an amalgam; it has a whole character of its own. I think it has shown a new kind of confidence about radicalism which was certainly not part of the Alliance and not actually part of the Liberal Party either in its latter days. The Liberal Party became a party that was interested in manoeuvring for power rather than planning in terms of radical policies. You saw that new confidence very clearly in the strength of the anti-nuclear power vote at the Conference. It was probably the most interesting vote at the Conference because it showed a self-confidence about doing something that both parties previously had not had and held back from doing, which I found quite startling in the new party. I suspect also that I am more green, and have been more green for a long time, than either David Steel or David Owen. It has been part of my politics since I was first in it in 1976.

Challenging the Thatcherite agenda

I suggested that the Alliance had dropped the green bits of its policies in 1987 because they were fundamentally in conflict with an otherwise conventional and grey agenda. Did he see any fundamental philosophical shift occurring in the new party which would be more compatible with the green approach?

Ashdown nodded, but said that he did not see it in terms of philosophy but in terms of practical politics. I think we fought 1987 on the old agenda and that's why we failed. That agenda has as its heart that beating Mrs Thatcher is accepting materialism and making sure that you beat her at it. I recognise now that that is no longer the basis upon which she would be defeated.

We have always seen the green agenda as somehow being in conflict with economic success. We have always been stuck in this growth argument which I think is the wrong question and therefore elicits the wrong answer. What I see clearly now (and frankly I did not see it before '87, but I have seen it as a result of the rethink all of us had to do in the face of the third election defeat) is that it is actually essential that the green agenda is not a 'bolt-on'; it is not an 'add-on'; it isn't a retreat to some Sylvan past; it is actually the basis for a proper, decent, restructured and prosperous economy for Britain in the future. So instead of being sidelined, which I think it was in '87, and therefore dispensable if you are coming under pressure, it is actually coming into the centre in the way in which we approach our economics. Green ideas, I think, are the basis of the new economics.

This sounded hopeful. I pointed out that greens criticised

conventional economics because it was centred towards growth and material standards. Greens would see politics needing to be in harmony with the earth, so that, certainly for western industrial cultures, green politics would be concerned with reducing consumption of resources. Ashdown thought that it did tie in:

I think there are some in the green movement and in the Green Party who see green politics as a retreat. I think there are many more who see it as going forward to the new base that we will need for the structure of our society. Part of that new base will be an effective economic system which will enable Britain to be prosperous without having that prosperity at the cost of environmental destruction, or starvation of the Third World.

"the green agenda... is not an 'add-on'; it isn't a retreat to some Sylvan past; it is actually the basis for a proper, decent, restructured and prosperous economy for Britain in the future."

You are beginning to see an economic system which will have to be low resource use and high value added, and we are going to have to be thinking about using what we have got rather than vast amounts of raw materials... and vast amounts of manual labour to produce goods which can be produced effectively in the emerging nations of the Third World. I think we are also talking about an economic system based on the information technologies and that those will enable you to be less greedy in resource consumption and much more in tune with the preservation of the environment in which we live. I think that is actually the new economics and the new green ideas coming together to project the kind of society we require.

Let me say this to you: we will do the green movement terrible damage if we stick to the idea that you have to be less prosperous, less wealthy, less successful in order to be green.

Sustainable growth

I pushed harder: "So you see no conflict between growth and...?" He cut me short.

I don't accept 'growth' as the right way that you judge this. The argument has been about growth/no growth. Well for the first six years of Mrs Thatcher's nine years we had a 'no-growth' economy - indeed we had a 'minus-growth' economy - but we still pillaged our raw materials; we still treated our labour forces as waged slaves; and we still ran our economy at the expense of Third World countries. The simple argument about growth/no-growth is not the right question, so you don't get the right answer. I attach myself to the word 'sustainable' with more enthusiasm than I do to growth/no-growth. The really key question is: 'what can we do in Britain to run a sustainable economy (because that, I believe, will be the basis for successful economics in the post-industrial era) and at the same time run it as a sustainable economy in world terms so that you are not raping the Amazon of its rainforests and you are not having success in this country at the price of poverty in the Third World.

What we are doing is actually moving to our own area, a sustainable area in the world economy, and leaving room for the developing nations to develop their own raw materials and resources through to finished goods. The beauty of this agenda, it seems to me, is in a way the model finally synthesises all the things you want to

do and all the things you have to do.

You do seriously believe that the economy can both recover in the conventional sense and also become sustainable; that we can have a higher standard of living and be sustainable at the same time?

Yes. But I think you need to alter some of your definitions. First of all you need to alter your definition of employment. I personally don't believe that we will see full employment, if you define 'employment' as you defined it in the past. I think if that is the case - if we are going to stick in the old definition of employment - then I think we are in for high endemic levels of unemployment for a long time to come. So you are going to have to alter your definition of what employment and unemployment is. I had a woman come to see me not long ago who said "I worked in a solicitor's office six

hours a week and they said I was employed. Now I have kids. I look after them 16 hours a day, seven days a week, and I'm unemployed." That is the nonsense of 'employment'. It's like the nonsense of judging your economy by this ludicrous measure G.D.P...

...what are you going to replace it with?

Well, let me finish... I also think you said higher standards of living. Yes, but how do you measure 'higher standards of living'? Up until now we have measured that purely in quantity terms. It has always been said, if you have got more in Mrs Thatcher's shopping basket; if you have more fridges, more telephones and more cars you are better off. Now I think the Taylor/Nelson report shows very clearly that even today there is a growing number of people who are not judging success and higher standards of living on purely materialist terms. They are beginning to judge it - thank God, and at last - in terms of 'quality of life'. If you say "can we have a better society in terms of quality of life, as in the green agenda?" then I am absolutely certain the answer is yes. If you judge it in purely quantitative terms, well I think maybe not.

If the Democrats are going to centre their economic approach on quality, how are you going to decide whether you are achieving it?

"I do not know" is the straight answer. I do not know. But we have to begin to work on it.

He then suggested some aspects of social audit and questioned whether we actually needed a measurement. David Owen had not even understood the question: at least Ashdown was interested. I said he wouldn't know whether he was improving quality of life unless it was quantified in some way. Ashdown obviously had no clear answer. He said that people would vote for someone else if the government did not deliver quality of life. He suggested measuring 'value added' rather than 'throughput' or 'disposable income' or 'free time'. I was pressing this point because I have been keeping up with the New Economic Foundation's 'Alternative Indicators Project'. When I started giving him details his face lit up. he stopped me and called in his researcher to listen! I promised him more information when the study was complete.

We turned to his attitude towards Basic Income [see GL57 & Letters, GL58,59,60]. He turned out to be a big fan of the idea:

I do not see any evidence that it will be dependency

creating. In a society in which there will be a large number of people who are unemployed, it will give some people a dignity of life. I can see a justification in a society with near full employment for people to have to visit the Social Security Office to claim benefit.

He assumed that there would be high levels of unemployment for the foreseeable future and saw the state's job as providing people with subsistence. He pointed out that the key problem with basic income was the high marginal tax rates (e.g. 50%) which would be needed to pay for a perfect system. His answer was that he did not see the perfect system ever being achieved, but that that was no reason for failing to start. He saw the problem as people's attitudes to high tax levels rather than some basic fault in the concept. He would maintain universal benefits such as Child Benefit and Old Age Pension and reverse the tide of targeting. He saw this as a good way of selling the idea politically:

If we were to say to the British people that we have a social wage already for limited age groups - for children and for elderly people - the only people who don't have it are the people in between. It is not a remarkably revolutionary concept. If we build on those two and switch across to a unified tax and benefit system, then a social wage is 80% there.

Waiting for Internationalism

I went on to ask him about how a sustainable economy could be achieved. Did he share what I described as the 'Red/Green' approach, where government controlled the 'commanding heights' of industry to ensure that they complied with ecological and social objectives, or did he go for the global sustainability approach where the British economy continues to be linked with international trade. Ashdown is clearly an internationalist:

It is exactly the same as the other great problem which confronts us. If we want to solve the problems of nuclear weapons we cannot solve them just in Britain because we could be destroyed by whatever happened outside. We cannot solve the problems of acid rain just in Britain nor the problems of AIDS, or the ozone layer. There is a dangerous strain of isolationism in the green movement. We have to play our part in the international scene.

This means a number of things: it means sacrificing sovereignty - of course it does. (In any case that Britannia-esque sovereignty with a shield and a trident is illusory anyway.) Some of that sovereignty would be best placed in the hands of a European entity. But I would go further: we can only solve the problems which confront us, both as a nation and as a world, if we commit ourselves to strengthening international institutions.

I asked him whether he thought the institutions already existed.

Yes, they exist. I was a British diplomat to the United Nations in Geneva. They do not have any power. That is not surprising in a world which has been totally dominated by two superpowers and where international affairs have been resolved on the basis of power politics. It is not surprising that the U.N. was diminished to the status of a talking shop and a useful meeting place for the two super powers.

If we are now moving away from that towards a more multi-sided basis for world power, and we may be moving to a point where there is the opportunity, if the political will exists, to really make effective international institutions. This is where the whole thing ties together. What is happening between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. gives Europe (including Eastern Europe) a unique opportunity to develop more independently; to make room for the power blocs of the Third World and the Pacific Basin; and to give some strength and will to the United Nations.

Immeasurably anti-nuclear

I turned to the subject of defence and to his attitude to the elimination of nuclear weapons and to non-aggressive defence.

He told me that he had written an article for the British Army Review in 1962 on the 'hedgehog' defence theory - it hadn't been published! But he now didn't think that it addressed the problem:

The point about the nuclear weapon is that it is the ultimate fulfilment of the biblical destiny. We are all brothers [sic.] at last - not because we want to be, but because we are sharers in a common fate. It is a destiny which hangs over all: those who have nuclear weapons and those who do not; those who use it and those who do not; the innocent and the guilty alike. It will advance us not one wit if Britain should turn in on itself and adopt a hedgehog style of defence. I take the view, and it goes straight back to an internationalist view: the question is not how much do we hate nuclear weapons, but how can we find a mechanism for controlling, diminishing and, if possible, abolishing nuclear weapons - not just in Britain, but worldwide. That is the only moment when we will be safe: when we can begin to control our own destiny.

I asked him whether he thought that the progress made on the INF deal was a positive sign, given the fact that despite the destruction of one type of weapon, the total number of nuclear weapons had increased; a few hundred land-based cruise missiles removed, but several thousand air-launched and submarine-based deployed.

He was annoyed by this:

The question we have to ask ourselves - has the deal between the United States and the USSR made the world a safer place? - the unequivocal answer is that it has. If missiles have been removed from the front line and are now at sea and separated, we now have more control. Having gone through the process of reaching an agreement with the Soviet Union, we now have a dialogue which is beginning to wind it down. Gorbachov is now talking about Strategic Arms reductions. The world is an immeasurably safer place.

Obviously I am not satisfied. I oppose the modernisation of nuclear weapons in Europe. I share the French and German position that we would be mad to modernise in the face of what is still a continuing dialogue; a continuing movement to disarmament. The whole process of winning peace has got to be a step-by-step process. Every step you take makes it easier to take the next. We have taken a number of important steps that we never imagined we would be able to take.

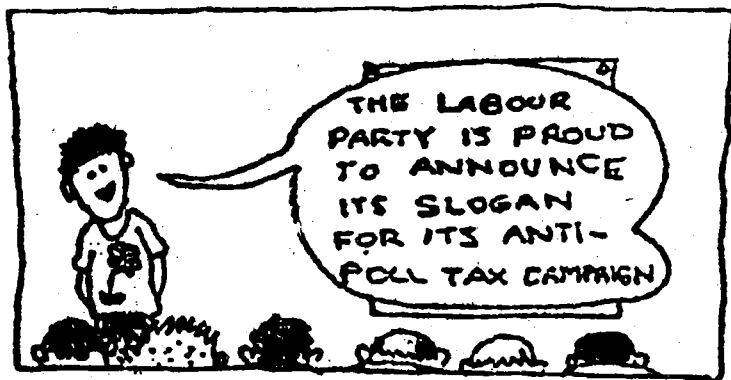
Ashdown at the crossroads?

The remainder of my questions - on energy and agriculture - were answered with the same mix of enthusiasm for finding a green approach and lack of detailed knowledge or well thought-through answers. His ability to admit that he did not know all the answers was in stark contrast to David Owen. In a politician this is both a strength and a problem: at a time of rapid change we need politicians willing to experiment, but the media and the public want conviction politicians who know all the answers.

I was left with the strong feeling that if Paddy Ashdown and the Democrats could make use of their present low media profile to restructure their agenda around sustainable economics then they could emerge with confidence and assurance in the early 1990's. Whether they take this path, or shelter in the middle of the road in search of more short-term advantage remains to be seen.

Last year in GL58, Ken Jones urged us to join a register of people refusing to pay the poll tax. BARRY MAYCOCK examines how people are organising against the tax in Scotland and England, and suggests unpalatable lessons that people in England will have to learn if there is to be any hope of successfully challenging this disreputable attack on basic justice.

Will the peasants be able to revolt this time?



THE POLL TAX will soon be upon us, along with the first registration forms, and the first canvassers. Will doors be bolted fast and barricades built? Will the campaign against the tax be a dynamic one, or will it simply trundle along, predisposed to defeat? In Scotland, government and opposition have been locked in a messy conflict for the past year, and now registration has been virtually completed; while in England and Wales the canvas could begin any time after May 22nd, when the legal powers enabling poll tax officials to question the public will come into effect. The registration has been delayed in order to avoid the local elections, where the tax will surely be a vote loser for the government; in mid-May a DoE leaflet explaining the registration process will be sent to every household, followed by a press and TV advertising campaign. A target date of December 1st has been set for the completion of the register, with payment in force by April 1990.

The tax is certainly unpopular (though the present rating system is not exactly popular either), and its iniquities have often been exposed: especially the way it will hurt the poorest and most vulnerable deprived areas, and the poorest and most vulnerable people, and strikes at the heart of local government and welfare, while further promoting centralisation and state surveillance. There are plenty of grievances here, and issues round which to organise; but all the discontent in the world will not necessarily lead to effective action.

Life after May 22nd 1989

Registration provides the focus for the first phase of the campaign, and people in England and Wales can learn from the Scottish experience. One obvious point to be made is that refusal to register for the tax, even by the concerted action of large numbers of people, will not halt its imposition. The state already has most of the information it needs on every one of us; registration data will be compiled with or without our help. Even if that hapless individual, the 'responsible person' of the household, fails to fill in the form and the door-to-door canvassers are evaded or repulsed, the poll tax staff will be able to use the electoral register, and other local authority lists. Within the law the government can obtain our 'personal details' from many existing files without our knowledge and consent; and 'unofficially' its reach is virtually limitless. A veritable army of 'snoopers' will be needed to pry into our private lives; as one borough treasurer has stated, indeed boasted, "we do get a lot of anonymous information on these matters". Even so there is a fear, already voiced by the NCCL, that the whole operation cannot be carried out properly without the eventual introduction of ID cards. When completed, the register will be public, perhaps even for sale; everyone's addresses will be available (e.g. women in refuges fleeing domestic violence). If fully completed this will be the largest and best organised set of files in our history.

Given the powers and the information available to the government, withdrawal from the electoral roll will not help us in any way, nor will it hinder the registration, which is why opposition groups, including the Green Party, have urged people not to surrender their right to vote. Nevertheless, many people will be discouraged from enrolling as electors; a recent study in Glasgow indicated that 11,500 had dropped off the electoral register in anticipation of the introduction of the poll tax. However, the struggle over registration is more in the nature of a preliminary skirmish, and even those opponents of the tax who advocate non-payment have urged people to register, so as not to incur the 50 fine (rising to 200 after the initial penalty) which will be imposed upon them - or, to be more precise, upon those 'responsible persons' whose task it is to fill in the forms. This 'phony war' in Scotland is now more or less over, with the government claiming a

99% success rate (but then it would, wouldn't it?). However, its success has been patchier than it cares to admit, with many thousands of individuals holding out everywhere; 50,000 final warning letters were sent out in Strathclyde alone, where 1,300 have recently faced a 50 civil penalty.

This is in fact an important phase in the campaign, with local anti-poll tax groups springing into being, and testing out tactics of obstruction and delay so as to ensnare the tax in its own bureaucratic machinery. The possibilities here are endless: returning uncompleted forms, asking complicated questions, waiting the full 18 days before replying, referring the officers to other 'responsible' people, training household pets specifically to sniff out and chew up poll tax forms, etc. Lots of fun can be had here, and the whole process can be spun out as long as possible. There have been suggestions that the name 'Wat Tyler' (leader of the 1381 revolt) could be used in the form as the 'responsible person'. It is important not to answer questions when someone is sent round, and to make sure that support is available, with fellow campaigners accompanying or preceding the poll tax canvassers as they work their way down the street.

In Scotland refusal and obstruction have been accompanied by acts of direct and open defiance: in Ruchazie, Glasgow, residents in one street returned blank forms to the local registration office, as did Tenants' Association members in Dunterlie; in Pollockshields, Glasgow, poll tax snoopers have needed police protection. In May last year a poll tax canvasser was attacked; and at the same time widespread hostility from the public led to a spate of resignations by registration officers. An imaginative use of direct action at this stage of the campaign - for example, the public destruction of poll tax forms - will be important in creating publicity and inspiring other acts of resistance. Indeed the whole subject is perfect for street theatre, which could draw its inspiration from the 1381 revolt.

Problems for a party-political campaign

The campaign will enter a new, more crucial phase when registration is completed. And here it is likely that the current confusion within the opposition parties, Labour in particular, could affect the local anti-poll tax groups, and indeed the whole campaign. Labour is deeply divided on the question of non-payment, being under pressure nationally to obey the law, and locally to defy it. Its official stance remains one of 'sympathy' towards poll-tax victims, giving advice, helping on rebates, and examining ways of alleviating hardship caused by the tax. A special SLP conference at Govan Town Hall in September voted against a campaign of non-payment which, it was argued, would bring people into conflict with local government: of course in Scotland, local government tends to be controlled by Labour. However this policy only just scraped through with the help of STUC block votes. The outcome was not unexpected: even the protestors who urged delegates as they entered the conference to 'smash the poll tax' had the foresight to organise a 'you sold us out again' lobby to catch them on the way out! There remains bitter opposition to official party policy within the Labour movement; after the Govan by-election defeat a 'Committee of 100' was formed, a cross-party and non-party initiative including many Labour dissidents, among them seven MPs.

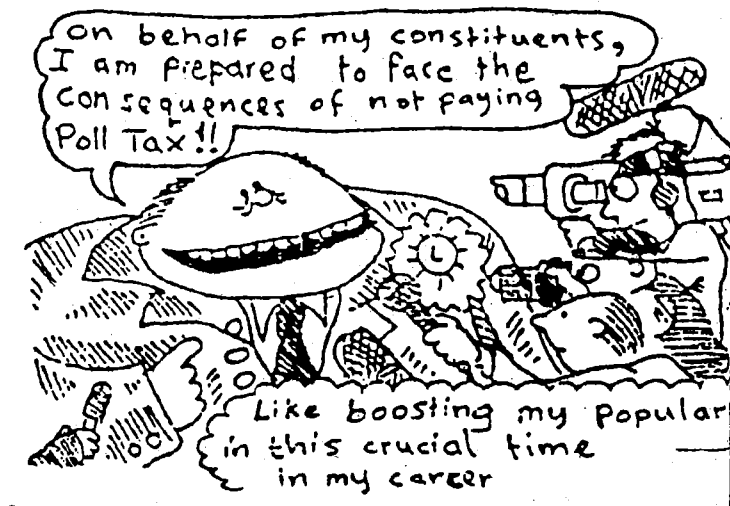
The debate on the poll tax at the Labour party conference last autumn was an angry one, again on the issue of non-payment. David Blunkett made the point that people would blame the party for misleading them if it advocated policies it knew would fail; while shadow Scottish secretary Dewar rejected the idea of a few better off people refusing to pay and "reaching for martyrdom without the pain", because others would follow them and end up facing the debt collectors. This was a swipe at



SNP policy (also advocated by Labour dissidents) with its slogan "Can Pay, Won't Pay", which appeals to those more affluent rebels who can refuse to pay on principle, as an act of solidarity with those who are struggling to find the money. The SNP hopes to get 100,000 people committed to non-payment; but its policy has provoked scepticism, and Neil Ascherson (in the Observer) has remarked: "any party which stakes its reputation on persuading large numbers of people not to pay will end up with the stake through its own foot." In addition, the SNP is not responsible for implementing the tax so it can afford to put its weight behind a campaign of non-payment.

Yet the only SNP council in Scotland is itself busily obeying the law; and the government is convinced that it has stitched things up so completely that there is little, if any, scope for obstruction by hostile councils. Attempts at rebellion by Lambeth's Labour group have been blocked by council officials who have warned the group that they would have to appeal to the Environment Secretary and take the councillors to court if poll tax preparations were obstructed. As Labour's Charles Gray, leader of Strathclyde Regional Council, announced some time ago, "the legislation must be applied"; so he is ruthlessly enforcing it, because a delayed collection will lead to reduced revenue, involving cuts in services and an increased poll tax burden on those least able to afford it.

Indeed the tax is so cunningly contrived, cementing the links between services and those who use them, that people will welcome such cuts simply to enable them to pay the poll tax bill. In the meantime, Labour councils wring their hands in anguish while enforcing the tax, and allow themselves the one protest possible by making it plain that they are operating the tax unwillingly, and putting all the blame on the government. What is usually said is that Labour has no choice in the matter, but it



does have a choice, though perhaps a bleak one; councillors could refuse to co-operate and then face prosecution and dismissal from office; but by doing so they would be exposing what is really going on, who is actually to blame, and would be able to throw themselves into the task of genuine opposition. As it is they merely do the government's dirty work.

Help from the unions?

One of the most important aspects of this campaign will be its involvement and liaison with trade union activity, though within the trade union movement itself the same kinds of confusion and division are likely to frustrate effective action. The Scottish experience again should forewarn us as to what to expect in England and Wales. The STUC for example initiated a 'week of action' against the tax as part of the 'Stop It' campaign, beginning on September 10th last year with various demonstrations, and culminating three days later with the '11th hour'. The idea was to get everyone "at work, in the street, everywhere" to do something at 11 o'clock for 11 minutes (!). The STUC suggested that people could sign petitions, ring church bells, and sound car horns - the kind of nonsense associated with so many opposition campaigns these days, rather like CND planting bulbs as a witness against the nuclear state; almost as if we were celebrating our own impotence. In the event there were stoppages in certain isolated workplaces; roads were blocked in Glasgow city centre; and Tory councillors who gave out pro-tax leaflets had to be rescued by the police. The whole action was a short-lived and confusing mess, the stoppage scornfully dismissed as "a tea-break against the tax"; the 'day of action', so popular a strategy with the TUC these days, becomes a means of dissipating energy and momentum, and it is certainly no problem for the authorities to sit it out for the day, let alone 11 minutes.

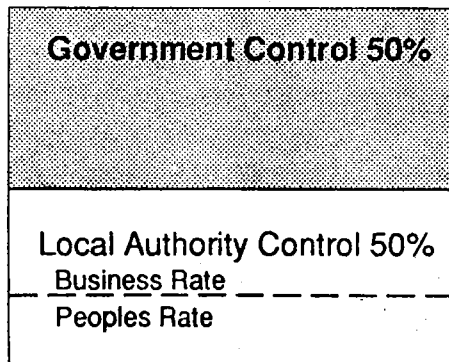
Although trade unions (e.g. NALGO) have urged their members to carry out poll tax work, and will only support "public opinion" campaign, there have been many trade unionists who have refused to be confined by official policy: a leaflet has been brought out by 'Nalگو Members against the Poll Tax' calling on trade unionists to fight the "weak kneed" policy of the union. There is obviously scope here for supporting any workplace rebellion, and trade

union collective action can prevent the victimisation of individuals who do not wish to implement the tax.

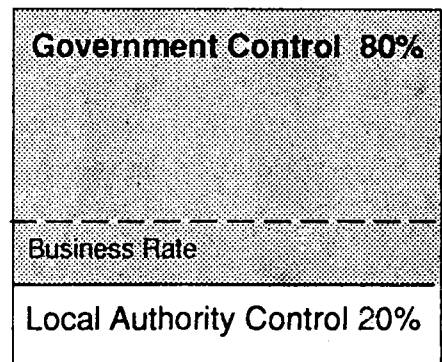
Oxford's campaign: learning the lessons?

In order to disentangle itself from party political confusions each local campaigning group will no doubt try to be as independent and autonomous as possible, and create networks of resistance throughout the country. Delegates from 20 anti-poll tax groups met in Oxford on November 27th last year to discuss a broad-based campaign in England and Wales, one which would not be controlled by any particular faction or tendency. Group 'autonomy', however, works best by excluding and narrowing down, the very opposite of the 'broad-based' approach; and 'independence' will not exempt the group from the usual conflicts and confusions around the issue of non-payment.

Our own local campaign here in Oxford has declared that it seeks to repeal the poll tax through "public



Rating System



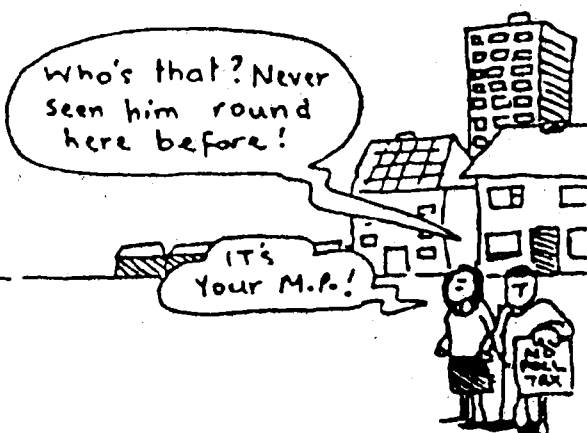
Poll Tax System

Local Authority Budget

education and protest, including support for people refusing to pay the tax". But "support" can mean anything from energetic strategies of non co-operation to mere advice and information; non-payment cannot be advocated, and given a high profile, without coming into conflict with local authorities who have to enforce the tax and sympathetic local councillors who may have strong links with the campaign. Thus the group, as an anti-Tory coalition, could end up simply apologizing for the local Labour council. There is a danger that the campaign will then divide into 'official' anti-poll tax groups and 'unofficial' ones, advocating civil disobedience and direct action.

The mistake lies in thinking that groups are 'non-aligned' simply because they say they are, whereas campaigners who are politically active are already 'aligned', bringing their respective political positions into the group, along with the confusions and equivocations of various political parties. Local politicians and supporters reappear in the group in another guise, wearing their non-party 'campaign' hats, and engaging in all the customary 'fixing' behind the scenes. This is why it is necessary to discuss, and think through, issues of group structure, the way meetings are run, decisions made, and tensions resolved, and different political positions are respected and accommodated. Otherwise the political perspective of the broad-based group will turn out, paradoxically, to be extremely narrow; its very breadth will tend to produce a lowest common denominator of 'moderate' opinion, and its subsequent 'moderation' could then drive out the more radical activists whose energy and momentum are vital to the campaign.

Already I feel a sense of foreboding: a poster has been issued by our local group bearing the words "The Poll Tax Is Unfair!" What slogan could be feebler? (Unless we suggest that "The Poll Tax Is Not Very Nice!") The government is not playing a game by the rules of "fairness"



indeed the supporters of the tax claim that it is much fairer (within the terms of their particular perspective). None of our moralising ever has the slightest effect because the government simply counters with a 'morality' of its own. Pious slogans are not enough; only real 'militancy' can destroy this tax - and it is a measure of the success of state propaganda that the word 'militancy' is associated in the public mind with 'lunacy' and 'violence'.

At least this campaign confronts us with the day-to-day reality of local action, since we must work effectively within our own communities, and as 'street contacts' or in 'street groups' with our nearest neighbours. To be successful this needs a different kind of politics from one which has been so prevalent since the 1960s, of single-issue campaigns involving the same few 'enlightened' individuals moving from issue to issue with another badge, and another slogan. This campaign must be rooted in the community and the workplace, where we live and where we work; its success will depend on our ability to build 'communities of resistance' from below, as opposed to showering enlightenment from above. Otherwise any civil disobedience campaign will simply provide an occasion for the usual familiar faces, having moved from nuclear weapons to the poll tax, parading their consciences once again before the eyes of bored magistrates. The less privileged cannot afford a 'principled' objection and many will seek to evade the tax, as did the rebels of 1381, because they have no choice. For these, anti-poll tax defence funds could be set up to help with fines and costs.

Modest expectations

I must admit to feeling hesitant at starting out on yet another long campaign, knocking on doors in order to 'stir up apathy', trying to involve people who already have so many other problems, with little to offer but hard work and a very uncertain outcome. It seems more than ever necessary to start out with few illusions, realising that boastful claims of 'smashing this' and 'smashing that' usually end up with nothing being smashed - except perhaps a few loud activists in the local pub. One such illusion is that non-payment, obstruction and continual civil disobedience will 'clog the courts', and lead to some sort of bureaucratic collapse. This claim was heard often during the heyday of NVDA in the peace movement, and it just didn't happen, even though court cases did pile up, and some did drag on and on, unfortunately into oblivion. In any case the government has decided to bypass the usual legal machinery if need be, intending to transfer for the first time enforcement powers from the magistrates' courts to council officials, who will be able to obtain a 'liability order' and order deductions from wage packets and income support, and send in bailiffs to seize goods.

We have been here before; we know that martyrdom (especially for those 'prominent people' who have declared their intention not to pay) will be avoided at all costs. The whole system of enforcement will be enormously expensive, but a government that spent untold millions to defeat the miners will have no qualms about spending another fortune to see that the tax is implemented. It must be recognized that the government hasn't blundered into this situation through arrogance or incompetence: it has deliberately sought this confrontation, in the same way as it previously struck at organised labour by choosing to fight the NUM, its strongest union. Ahead of us is a new barbarism, and the government means to take us there, with the 'flagship' of the poll tax leading the way towards the destruction of collective welfare, of local politics, of a genuine opposition rooted in local democracy. Because of the issues at stake, and the degree of opposition involved, the anti-poll tax campaign could be the most important collective challenge to the government since the miners' strike.

LIFE AS A GREEN in these times is easier than you think! If up until now you have lived your life as a communist, capitalist or socialist and sincerely wish to live as a green then in that sincerity you are already half-way there. But even so, knowing the problem is one thing: providing a cure is another.

To give you an example, take off your shoes and socks and go out for a walk on the streets barefoot. Unless your feet are totally accustomed to this, the first thing you notice is that you walk differently. Instead of looking way ahead to see where you are going, you find you are not only moving ahead more slowly but that you are continually looking down at where you are placing your feet so you don't stand on pebbles or pieces of glass and hurt yourself.

After a while you find that instead of clumping your feet down heel-first, you start taking care, not only about where, but also how you place your feet.

Where do you place your feet?

On ground that won't hurt them.

How do you place your feet?

The opposite to how you normally walk! Toes first, ball of the foot second, and the heel last.

Think about this!!!

Now try walking looking around as you used to, never looking down at your feet. The feeling is fine, the view is great until you tread on something sharp that stops you in your tracks.

That's right!

You look down again at the ground!

Soon you discover that the only safe way to walk on anything but grass is to watch where you are placing your feet. If you want to look round, first stop and then look up.

To live like this means eventually you have to take a totally fresh approach to the fundamentals of life. If you sincerely want to start living green then this is as good a point as any at which to start. At every opportunity you have, take off your shoes and socks and walk barefoot, even indoors. This is the only way you can feel the earth move, so maintain physical contact with the ground whenever you can. Living green is not something you can automatically do: it is something you gently become absorbed by. It is like learning to walk again, one step at a time. So your first move is walking everywhere barefoot, one pace at a time whenever and wherever you can. This way you soon learn where you prefer to walk - in the long grass and not on the hard pavements of civilisation.

But to be realistic, you can't walk barefoot everywhere all of the time. Nevertheless it is always pleasant to have a reminder of the real world close at hand when you are forced to enter the concrete jungle. The next time you go to a beach, stream or lake, choose a pebble.

Take your time.

Pick one that not only looks right, but also feels comfortable in your hand. It must be a handy size so you can carry it anywhere, anytime, anyplace. When you have found your pebble, carry it with you all the time. If you feel everything is getting too much for you, put your hand in your pocket and hold your pebble. Remember where you got it from!

If it was from the sea-shore, think of the sea. If from a stream, think of the babbling running

JOHN PUXTY suggests some self therapy for all you tired green activists losing touch with the earth

Don't just talk green! Live green!



Finally, when you get an afternoon off, go and find yourself a birch tree. Since they grow practically anywhere, even in big cities or on the bleakest landscape, they are easy to find. 1200 years ago they were known in Runic symbology as Barkan, the Mother; the one who nurtures life. It was thought that if a birch tree could grow in a particular place then so too could people.

First - especially if there are a number of birch trees near you - visit them all and see which *feels* best to you. Touch them. Look at them. Look inside yourself to sense how each tree makes you *feel!* This may take you some time, though for most people, for some inexplicable reason, it is usually the first birch tree they seriously approach which they finally choose.

Take off your shoes and socks and spend an hour or so sitting under your birch tree, resting your back against it. Touch its roots or bark with your hands.

Turn and hug it if you want to.

After a while stand under it and touch the branches.

Stroke the leaves. Talk gently to it as if it was something or someone close and precious to you. One or two people find the tree whispering back.

To begin with, most don't.

Then, when it seems right, go and sit a distance away, say twenty or thirty feet from your tree, and watch it.

I quote someone who wrote to me about this experience: "I must say that my first thought was amazing, spending a day with a tree! This was one of the best days I have spent! ...at first I didn't feel anything, but as time went on I felt that it was a master trying to tell me something, but at the same time I felt it was warm and loving. ...I felt positive energies oozing from it. I felt it wanted to tell me something, but didn't. I did feel it reaching out and suddenly everything was alive, the grass, air, wildflowers... I felt that they were more alive than me... It was a funny feeling that instead of me looking at them, they were looking at me."

This person went out with an open heart, and being 'open' she was filled with all the delights which can come from a quiet day's meditation with a tree. She didn't sit cross-legged and sing mantras. She didn't bow down and worship it. She just went along for a day to find her tree and spend some of her time in the real world. In return she was filled with the joy of being part of nature; of taking her first steps towards her own spirituality, of beginning to live green.

Her first experience has notably changed her life. In her next letter, she wrote: "since I started this tree thing I notice trees everywhere and get all sorts of feelings. I also see things in a different light..."

Now, every time she is faced with problems which seem too much to bear, she goes to spend some time meditating with her tree before making a decision.

If anyone would like any further insight into "living green", please send an sae with a letter about yourself to John Puxty, 24 Greenwood Crescent, Carnforth, Lancs. LA5 8AT

water. If a pond, imagine the still, calm depths.

To many people, water represents the unconscious; the hidden spiritual depths. Perhaps the way you imagine the water may prove an effective gateway into your true spiritual reality. Maybe what has always been hidden to you will be revealed. If you want it to be, eventually it will be!

HIT AND MYTH

The Coming of the Greens
Jonathon Porritt & David Winner
(Fontana) 4.95

I PICKED UP *The Coming of the Greens* hoping to read new insights into the green movement and its philosophy, expecting Porritt to have built on his excellent *Seeing Green*, still the most readable single book that explains clearly what green politics is all about.

The Coming of the Greens is intended by the authors to be factual analysis of the greening of society. Each chapter takes a different area - the media, politics, art, life-styles and so on - and lists various aspects or strands that are becoming, or have already become green. This makes interesting reading, and the impressive strings of famous names who claim to be green show beyond doubt just how fashionable the term has become.

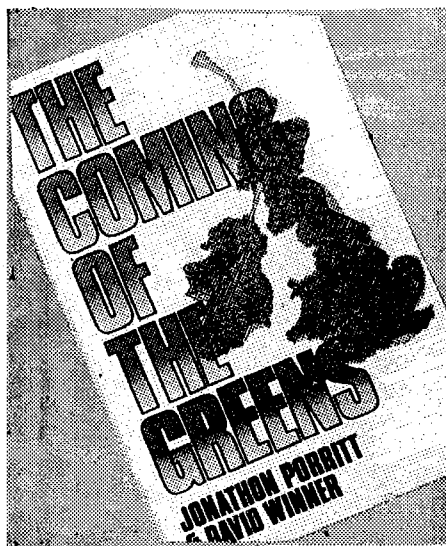
Yet these lists are not by themselves 'analysis', as claimed by the authors. The numerous examples of 'greening' are held up as proof that society as a whole is becoming greener, but there is no attempt to quantify the extent to which each area has been greened. The section on T.V. and Radio, for example, dwells at length on the BBC's nuclear thriller, 'Edge of Darkness', and the radio-soap, 'The Archers', but doesn't take on board the fact that most entertainment served up by the T.V. companies is not green in the slightest, and is likely to get worse with the advent of satellite T.V.

The book's objectivity is also in doubt. A small section on animal rights, for example, contrasts the British pride in their affection for animals (sic) with the deliberate violence and vicious campaigns of the A.L.F., without delving deeper either to understand the motives behind the actions of animal rights activists, nor to explore the ideological debate about the rights of animals. Instead, the reader is reminded that 'Hitler and other top Nazis were, of course, vegetarians', the ultimate irrelevant response of 'green' meat-eaters, all too aware of their self-indulgent hypocrisy.

The most astonishing piece of subjective writing in the book is the coverage of the greens in West Germany. In five pages, Porritt and Winner attempt a hatchet job on Die Grunen for making "an appalling mess of things", for their "almost wholly negative" contribution to the

international scene and for the major disruption they have brought about in international green bodies. Porritt and Winner imply that Die Grunen are victims of Marxist infiltration and personal intrigue: Hamburg's Red-Greens are singled out for attack for "facile sloganeering" and for their speaker, Thomas Ebermann, who "openly describes himself as a Communist".

The reader is left unenlightened as to the issues at stake in the arguments that have occurred within Die Grunen, just as the differing opinions within the animal rights movement are ignored by the authors. Furthermore, the many positive aspects of Die Grunen are either left out or not mentioned at all. For the as yet 'non-green' reader, an unattractive and hostile view will be formed of the Greens in Germany.



With my little knowledge of Die Grunen, Hamburg is for me the city where the Greens won over 10% in local elections after fielding an all-female slate, and where the local Greens have been outspoken in their support for squatters and the homeless in the face of recent police harassment and evictions. Why are these important aspects of Die Grunen omitted in preference for 'facile sloganeering' about reds under beds? It should be remembered that most of the social greening in Britain described by Porritt and Winner in their book happened years ago in West Germany as a result of Die Grunen's activities at grassroots and national levels.

It is sad that *The Coming of the Greens* contains so many sins of omission. Written as a sort of "history of the Greens so far", the lack of analysis, the occasional bias and the seeming hurry with which the book seems to have been put together, all conspire to make this book far from authoritative and at times, superficial and misleading.

TIM ANDREWES

WHERE THERE'S MUCK...

The Allotment
David Crouch and Colin Ward
(Faber & Faber) 13.95 hb.

I'VE OFTEN WONDERED what my neighbours make of my frequent, sometimes far too frequent, sorties down to the allotment. There doesn't seem to be anybody else in the street quite so conspicuously welly-booted for this sort of time-consuming pastime, and I do get the distinct impression that most people think it is a little odd; maybe just about acceptable only inasmuch as it can be passed off as eccentricity. And so I have this sort of fantasy that neighbourly comment on these toings and froings goes something like this: "Well, there goes Mark again with his broken-down disreputable old bike-trailer. Suppose we're in for another pile of unsightly looking, caked-in-mud parsnips, just like those filthy carrots last week. It's sure to lead to mud all over the street again. Anyway what I can't understand is why he can't buy them at Sainsbury's. It's not as if he can't afford them, and they'd certainly look a damn sight prettier than the mangled specimens he's always bringing back."

Well, is having an allotment odd? If you feel like me sometimes a bit unfairly marginalised as an urban Worsel Gummidge then *The Allotment* will definitely be your salvation. Colin Ward and David Crouch have made allotmenters seem quite normal, quite mainstream and in a perfectly respectable tradition. Infact it's everybody else, the 'mainstream' Sainsbury's shoppers, who have got it wrong!

That's one aspect of what's so good about this book: the historical and cultural context. As far as I can see, it proves that allotments have always been about and for people, and that's why they've had such stick from those with property and status.

In the early 19th Century the battle was all about rural labourers plots. "If you give 'em plots, the less they'll work for us!" was the cry of gentleman farmers and enclosers. Clerics who encouraged the allotment movement (usually for their own motives; temperance being the primary one) were bewailed as misguided dogooders. Yet all the evidence shows what remarkable things a labourer could do on a few poles of land and with a little bit of good husbandry.

Later, with increasing urbanisation, the battle shifted to the towns. It was railway workers, coalminers and foundrymen who were demanding plots of their own. Their demands,

along with those of their country cousins, became a hot political issue in the 1880's, finally forcing government to concede allotments - through the auspices of local municipal authorities - as a statutory right. Allotments henceforth did become heavily associated with northern and Welsh bastions of maleness, leek competitions and pigeon lofts, making do in times of strike and industrial strife, fighting off land requisitions and compulsory purchases.



Allotments in St Etienne, southern France

But this book is also about the much wider cultural, multi-ethnic inputs which Sicilian, Austrian, Ukranian, Afro-Caribbean and Indian allotmenters have contributed to the allotment scene. Rows upon serried row of cabbages have, in London and Birmingham, given way to peppers, sweet corn, okra and tobacco! And quite novel planting, no-digging systems too. As for that thing about the allotment being a bastion of the male... getting away from the wife and domestic chores... this is also partly (only partly) exploded. Yes, women do work, a lot of tough work, on allotments.

None of this has stopped the

allotment's detractors from berating the corrugated iron, do-it-yourself sheds, greenhouses and disordered assymetry of many plots as just too many carbuncles and eyesores (particularly when, as in the north, they're combined with pigeon lofts) which should be swept away in the interests of municipal order.

The DIY aspect is of course beauty to Colin Ward, the enthusiast for the common man's eye. And I agree. But of course the allotment has always been marginal inasmuch as 'mainstream' society has deemed it so: the railway siding, the environment you see from the train, or tucked away on the worst land on the edge of town that no self-respecting property developer wants - and certainly not in pride of place in the centre of town. Allotments next to the main shopping mall...? Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it?

So where does that leave us for the future? A few years ago, allotments were all the rage with FoE types like me. There was a sudden unexpected surge in the demand for plots and some bold attempts to take over derelict sites and turn them into blooming oases. Alas that all seems to have evaporated a bit like the South Sea Bubble, and, if Oxford's is anything to go by, the future is not rosy. Allotmenters seem to be an ever aging group of the population and young people are simply not coming forward to replace them.

It's all down to the consumer society of course. People had allotments in the past not because it was fun but because they actually did supply the extra margin of nutrition and well-being for the labouring classes which their wages would not provide. Who needs to grow their own now, when food is so cheaply mass-produced and so pleasantly displayed in Sainsbury's - especially when it might even be organically grown?

I know why I grow much of my own food. It's because I want to be a producer, not just a consumer; a bloody-minded intent not to be part of a cash-crop economy determined by the World Bank and the multinational food processing companies. But try convincing most people of getting down to the slog of an allotment for that... too high-minded by half. And anyway, an allotment is hard work and is very time consuming, especially in the Summer months.

Alternative scenarios have been discussed. In the 60's the Thorpe Report recommended that allotments be turned into planned leisure gardens; the idea being that councils would provide the infrastructure (tarmac, water, sheds) while the occupants in turn could grow flowers,

shrubs, have a neat lawn etc etc just as if it was their own back garden. Well it never seems to have caught on, particularly amongst traditional allotmenters who don't want to pay much higher rents for the privilege and actually enjoy making compost bins from available bits of corrugated and wood dredged out of a skip.

Thank God, I say, for their individuality; for their refusal to lie down to that other God of Mammon. But it still begs the questions? Is the return of Digger society viable? Will the agricultural crisis wake people up to the realisation that land and what one does with it is about all of us - not just the privileged few? Can people break out from the modern mind-set which links everything we do to market relationships, to which growing one's own food is the complete obverse? Answers on a postage stamp please, after having read this wonderful book!

MARK LEVINE

ECOLOGY AND SOCIALISM

Ecology and Socialism
Martin Ryle
(Radius) 5.95 pb.

MARTIN RYLE'S BOOK clearly and concisely (perhaps a little too concisely for 5.95) puts the case for ecological socialism; not only building on the tradition of Allan Robert's The Self-Managing Environment and authors like Bahro, Gorz and Trainer, but breaking new ground as well: Ryle takes on the difficult task of outlining (if only briefly) how a green economy might actually work.

The book covers such areas as the limits to growth debate, the relationship between humankind and nature, economics and strategies for achieving a green socialist society. Ryle deals well with the fraught issue of jobs versus the environment, with Ryle relating that he once knew a Belgian lorry driver "who made his living by loading up with Italian potatoes, driving to Brussels to sell them, and there loading up for the return journey with Belgian potatoes" (p.50).

Noting that the working class escatological myth of Marxism is now firmly dead (despite the efforts of the SWP and Campaign Group to resurrect the cloth-capped zombie), Ryle believes that "an effective eco-socialist movement must ultimately involve trade unionists and workers..." (p.88). Others would go further,

arguing like Peter Tatchell that trade unions will only regain public popularity if they campaign for the community on environmental and other wider issues rather than purely workplace demands.

Ryle rubbishes the 'neither left nor right but up front' line of the greens by pointing out that a capitalist system and market mechanism are inherently unsustainable and anti-ecological. By contrast, far from being a form of materialism, socialism holds at its very roots that we must put human values before abstract laws of supply and demand and profit.

Despite having compiled much of the Green Party's 1987 General Election manifesto, he is critical of its current economic policies; for example, believing a Basic Income Scheme to be unworkable; and, "while green rhetoric often implies a wholesale rejection of the economic status quo, few of the concrete policy proposals envisage basic structural change, tending rather to suggest piecemeal ecological or social reforms" - there is no advocacy of changes in the the ownership of large companies, for example, and although the manifesto in passing states that "52% of the U.K's land is owned by a mere 1% of the population", the policy on land tenure (levying a Community Ground Rent) stops short of envisaging any expropriation of that 52%. But at least the greens are discussing radical change. Labour are still going for growth and consumerism with Kinnock walking two steps behind Mrs Thatcher.

Despite many strengths, the book hardly gets anywhere on the position of how change is to be achieved - yet surely politics, even green politics, is the art of the possible. Ryle gives rather too much of a nod to social democracy for my tastes and hints at alliances with Labour as the way forward. I think this ignores the dangers of reformism, whereby superficial action merely masks the most visible signs of danger while the basic causes of ecological and economic crisis, human greed, capitalism, are left untouched. We need a radical original strategy for change if we are to achieve anything at all.

While the green consumer boom sees the publication of a series of extremely vapid, repetitive and trivial titles on ecological politics, it is refreshing to come across a volume containing such a high standard of debate. It is a shame that, as one publisher has been heard to remark, Green Party members don't read books; I hope they read this one and start thinking about how they can be about a sustainable socialist society.

DEREK WALL



WHY SHOULD GREENS BOTHER TO DEBATE MARXISM VERSUS LIBERALISM?

HAVING READ BOTH Tim Cooper's piece and Paula Casal-Ribas' reply, it seems to me that 'isms' are once again pulling people apart, grouping us into opposing, or at least disagreeing segments that are largely based on the dogmas of the past. Who after all was Marx but a white European male who died over a century ago? Is this not exactly the type of sectarianism we are trying to dismantle?

Yes, the writings of radical thinkers should be read and discussed, and opinions expressed, but the problems of today should be tackled by the people of today, in the methods and for the reasons they desire - not because of what someone else wrote in a different time and different circumstances. Our problems are our own and we have to solve them ourselves. This can only be done by discussion, reason and a mutual will to succeed.

To follow the dogmas or ideals of previous generations is wrong, whether it be their belicose ideas on settling arguments, their religious beliefs, legal structures, hierarchical institutions, society taboos, party philosophies and especially their radical thinkers.

The idolisation of any one writer/thinker is always dangerous - it goes against all the principles of decentralised power and beliefs in the autonomy and freedom of the individual that I'm sure most of us share.

Labels (black/white, protestant/catholic) are how people are kept segregated and in many cases oppressed. Labels and boxes are how the present system works to keep people in their place. To end it, we must not mimic it.

Assuming our aim is a peaceful, unified world with justice and harmony, shouldn't we remember to work for that with means that mirror what we want? So let's stop squabbling over names and get on with it!

David Hollis
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Dumbiedykes
Edinburgh

I FIND IT difficult to distinguish between the articles of Tim Cooper (GL66) and Paula Casal-Ribas (GL68) on Liberalism and Marxism as they both try to argue for the validity of their viewpoint whilst dismissing the other one. This neither seems to be intellectually pleasing nor a green way of doing things.

Green philosophy is not an isolated

event but rather the coming together of several strands of thought to produce a new framework which, while wedded to the past, is a whole new direction for politics to take. It is a bit like the early Christians arguing over their Jewish roots, forgetting that Christianity is a different way of looking at things. Infact this analogy can be taken further, since the early Christians debated whether they ought to be just a Jewish sect or include people of other traditions. The fact that they chose the latter course meant the religion could flourish.

The green movement is facing the same choice, and it is not worth arguing whether we are socialists, anarchists, liberals or whatever if we really want to be part of a mass movement. If we choose to be a sect then I for one shall remain uncircumcised.

It is valid and necessary to explore past experiments for there are good lessons to be learnt from their failure and success that allow us to do things better in the future. The 'neither right nor left but up front' slogan is only useful if we remember the front bit. We can only maintain our stance on the political high ground if we are constantly reassessing the lessons of the past, and today, from all political traditions and not just the one that brought us into the green movement in the first place.

Colin Kirby
Flat 1, 16 Whalley Rd
Whalley Range, Manchester

I HAVE A problem with both Tim Cooper and Paula Casal-Ribas' articles because they are both concerned with the theoretical and philosophical

WHAT ARE THE MOST

THERE ARE A few comments to add to Barry Maycock's interesting report (GL67) on the Animal Aid march and rally in Oxford, most of which I am in complete agreement with.

One of the main problems with such events is that they are a very inefficient use of the resources (human and financial) of the animal rights movement. Peaceful demonstrations are, in themselves, extremely unlikely to change the opinions or interfere with the 'work' of animal abusers. Therefore their main purpose must be to educate the general public by distributing leaflets, obtaining publicity etc. Now, to give out leaflets or get publicity (a local activity), one doesn't have to gather people from all over the country. It doesn't require large numbers and can be organised by a local group.

If, instead of these centralised national demonstrations, lots of local demos were carried out against local animal abuse establishments then this would be far more effective and efficient: massive travelling expenses would be saved, as well as a great deal of time; far more of the public would assumptions of liberalism and Marxism,

not with the actual politics of existing liberal and Marxist bodies. The Liberal Party in this country, now submerged chiefly in the SLD, has always contained a significant activist element whose radical liberalism makes them largely indistinguishable from libertarian socialists and greens. Obviously, this element coexists with conventional liberals who have little to contribute to a green perspective because of their unalloyed enthusiasm for capitalism.

Marxist groups in this country vary enormously, from overtly authoritarian Stalinists to the desperately respectable Communist Party of Great Britain, which seems genuinely interested in green politics. Most of the groups that can be called "Marxist" are not green, not non-violent and are immersed in the creation of vanguards as inspired by the Leninist model of the party. This makes them utterly undemocratic, elitist groups. More profound perhaps than these criticisms is the willingness of nearly all of these groups to ignore the electoral process which is what most people continue to see as politics.

I think greens from all parties have much to learn from the involvement of radical liberals in community campaigns. I think greens can also learn much about self-marginalisation from the innumerable Marxist sects. It is the actual political contributions and practice of political groups which matter, not assumed versions of their philosophy.

Steve Dawe
12 Clyde St
Canterbury
Kent

VIEWS ON A.P.A.'s

I AM WRITING to express my disquiet (and almost certainly that of South Coast Against Nuclear Navies) at the glorification of the violence (stoning) used against the police at Upper Heyford by Autonomous Peace Action (Green Peace News, GL67). Many in CND who are committed to direct action and who applauded and assisted in the removal of large sections of fence at Aldermaston last Easter, will have been alienated.

This stoning was in the midst of an otherwise successfully non-violent direct action organised largely by a local group (on a low budget and with little help from National CND... what "bureaucrats"?) and who dedicated months of to the careful planning of NVDA. That effort was parasitised by the activities of APA who came out of their engagement little better than the warmongers that the actions were aimed at. Potentially, they placed those who came in, and for peace, in danger from disgruntled police looking for a soft target. Little wonder that the legal aid people were not willing to provide assistance.

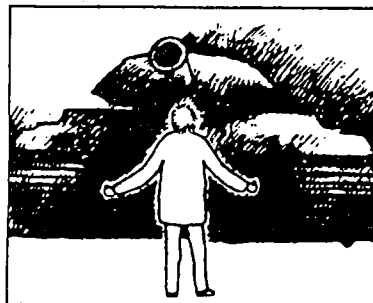
The observation from the anti-Vietnam war movement - fighting for peace is akin to fornicating for virginity - is almost too obvious to rehearse again, except that in this context it seems apt and sadly forgotten.

Is it really the aim of this group to leech themselves onto the efforts of others and to attempt to escalate the levels of the actions one more notch? Or are they really going to try such actions on their own without the protective shield of the genuinely peaceful, as is suggested at the end of

HEYFORD ACTION

P.N.Rogers' report? One almost hopes so. I rather suspect that with this display of violence, such support that APA was able to gather amongst the NVDAers has evaporated.

Graham Allen
SCANN, 119 Orchard Rd
Southsea, Hants



IN GL67 I find myself very much in agreement with what Jerry Spring writes but I totally disagree with Barry Maycock's advocacy of violence. Only fundamental change in the values and practices of the consumer society, in the unnecessary industrialism that feeds them and in the materialist, money-oriented philosophy that promotes them can save life on this planet.

To advocate violence only plays into the hands of the existing powers: they welcome opportunities to discredit us. Moreover, when we descend to violence, we demonstrate faith in the age-old, but in the present nuclear age, suicidal belief that only violence achieves results. To quote Paul Blau, President of ECOROPA (the European ecology movement):

"To attack, to conquer, to subdue, to destroy, be it our fellow men or non-human beings or even lifeless matter, has been the recipe of success through the millenia: now it has turned to suicidal behaviour" (Ghandi Foundation Annual Lecture 1988).

Of course, with sufficient imagination and courage to face the twin horrors of possible nuclear holocaust and of the war already being waged against the planet by short-sighted, profit motivated activities in agriculture, industry and forestry, are frightened and frustrated. We need their courage, commitment, skills and energies to research, practice and prove the validity and sustainability of alternative lifestyles. As the dangers grow ever more obvious, people are beginning to listen to us. We must not mislead them by promoting violence - the hallmark of the present suicidal society.

Kathleen Jannaway,
Movement for Compassionate Living
the Vegan Way
47 Highlands Rd,
Leatherhead,
Surrey

More letters overleaf—>

EFFICIENT TACTICS FOR THE A.R. MOVEMENT?

be reached; and the total publicity would be far greater. I often wonder though, whether the big societies like Animal Aid organise such national demos as an assertion of their own power and in order to be seen to be 'doing something', rather than having the best interests of the animals at heart.

Like Barry, I'd certainly like to see animal liberationists liberated from their self-imposed restraint, but I have my doubts about the wisdom of this being done at a national demo where arrests would be extremely likely and any militant action little more than symbolic. Just a few years ago, when attempts at mass direct action were frequent at such demos, the police soon cottoned on and began to be present in such numbers as to make such action impossible. It would surely be far more positive for people's anger to be channelled into ALF-style actions: they are a lot more effective; more than symbolic (they actually inflict tangible damage on the animal abuse industry); require fewer people per action; and carry less chance of arrest.

Perhaps the truth is that animal

liberationists also need to be liberated from their own social instincts. Their tendency to work together in large groups rather than operate guerilla-fashion has certainly impeded the progress of the movement - and the animals have had to pay the price for an attitude which treats the whole thing as a Sunday outing rather than a war.

Ronnie Lee, V02682
H.M.Prison Long Lartin
South Littleton
Evesham, Worcs

YOUR REVIEWER IN GL68 of *Corporate Killing* suggests boycotting "Ever Ready" batteries. However, this is the trademark of an entirely separate U.K. firm - "Eveready" is the name used for Union Carbide batteries. Perhaps you should clarify this by showing a connection, or retracting the boycott.

Paul King
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Nevilles Cross
Durham

GREEN PERSPECTIVES ON IRELAND

STEVE DAWE'S PLEA (GL68) for those concerned about the environment to take sides in the tribal conflict in Northern Ireland is quite unconvincing. It only requires a little thought to work out that whether Northern Ireland is governed from Westminster or Dublin has not the slightest relevance as far as alleviating, let alone solving, environmental problems. The sort of change he advocates would be a purely political, constitutional change that would make no difference to pollution, ecological imbalance and other such problems.

A little more thought will reveal that nationalist ideas - whether Irish, British or whatever - will have to die out before environmental problems can be solved because these problems, being planetary in character (e.g. ozone depletion), demand a planet-wide solution. A precondition for this is a global consciousness; a consciousness that we are all Earthpeople with a common interest.

Nationalism (i.e. Nation-State consciousness) is diametrically opposed to such world consciousness and so is an impediment to solving environmental problems. So greens should not only ignore appeals such as Steve Dawe's to support one or other nationalist movement (and he seems to have swallowed the Irish Republican cause hook, line and sinker) but should actively oppose all of them. Applied to Northern Ireland this means refusing to take sides and saying: a plague on both your houses.

What is required is One Green World, not (if you'll pardon the pun) One Green Ireland.

Adam Buick
40 Granville Gdns
London

STEVE DAWE PRESUPPOSES that Ireland should be reunited. Isn't there a green principle that decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level? Why should the people of Northern Ireland not be empowered to take their own decisions?

Irish nationalism claims that the people of the whole island constitute a nation, and have a right to national unity. But when nationalism becomes a device to force people into a state they don't want, it becomes a macho force for territorial aggrandisement rather than a force for liberation from imperialism. An imposed unification means that instead of repressing 600,000 Catholics, it becomes necessary to repress 900,000 Protestants.

Possible ways forward for Northern Ireland have been suggested by others. One is a power-sharing solution with some guarantees against breakdown. Another is the 'referendum': a referendum in which the winning answer is that with the most consensus support. Another is 'cantonisation': a radical decentralisation of power to

local communities. Such proposals base themselves on working out ways in which people in Northern Ireland could live together. The question of whether Northern Ireland should be part of a British or Irish state, or a separate state should be tackled afterwards.

Steve Dawe assumes an all-Ireland state following a withdrawal of the British Army. He assumes that since Britain caused the damage, withdrawal will undo the damage. But history cannot be withdrawn: rival population groups now exist. Withdrawal by the British Army or its replacement by U.N. troops solves nothing unless it is accompanied by changes in people's attitudes within Northern Ireland.

John Goodwillie
25 Mountain View Court
Harolds Cross
Dublin

I THOUGHT THE points raised in your latest editorial (GL68) very relevant and well articulated. I have often been very impressed by the honesty and coherence of your standpoint. Before reading it I had the bad luck to come across a totally biased and inaccurate piece of nationalist propaganda entitled "Can We Solve Britain's Irish problem?". I had at that point been contemplating sending you an impolite note telling you to stuff your nationalist garbage and cancel my sub.

I find it particularly disgusting to be lectured by someone of an apparently liberal and pacifist outlook whose only practical role in writing such an article is to lend moral support to the Provos. Like any other socialist, I have no illusions about the reactionary authoritarian nature of nationalism or the basis of its appeal to powerless, alienated wage-slaves looking for the cold comfort of a tribal identity or scapegoat for their ills, any nationalism Steve Dawe - I can speak from personal experience of the Provo variety.

After all, it was the present Irish PM, currently imposing economic policies to the right of Thatcher, who was convicted of gun-running for the IRA in the early '70s. He had earlier been involved in the breakaway of the Provisional IRA from the Official IRA when the latter was felt to be drifting to the left and losing its appetite for sectarian warfare.

I had been wondering whether I should describe myself as a 'green' in view of the fact that, although I have held a green perspective on events for years, if that now means I am to be numbered with 'liberal' nationalists hankering after an ethnic idyll, complete with a 'new' national police-force (plus suitably phoney pidgin-English title) to keep an inviolable 'culture' free of British sin then I'd rather not.

What Steve Dawe forgets, or maybe does not know, is that from the foundations of the Irish State to the late '60s, the national pride of the great mass of people in Eire depended on their view of themselves as exemplary Catholics. There was no tolerance for dissenters of any sort -

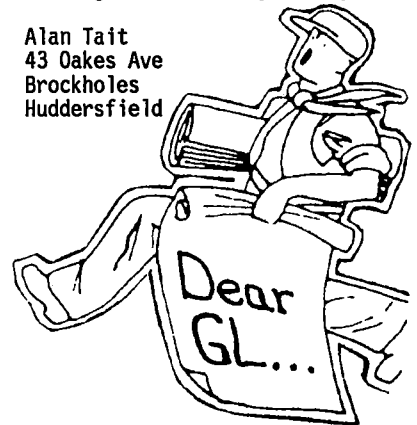
be they Paisleyites, lapsed Catholics or "atheistic" socialists. The Gaelic aspects of Irish life are now almost entirely decorative. The national culture of the South remains decisively Catholic, albeit in a state of confusion since the inroads of Vatican II. The present Pope is involved in a holding operation as a first step before reinstating old certainties and "good order".

The reason I live in mainland Britain is because I felt crushed by the pervasive religious constraints of Irish life. Eire has all the superficial trappings of liberal democracy but the reality for natives like myself, as opposed to escapist English visitors, is that the individual, the socialist and the democratic reformer are there regarded in the same way that religious zealots who condemn divorce but advocate sectarian schooling are regarded over here.

I'm hell-bent on smashing the real culture of Ireland in the same way that 'Irish' culture, left to its own devices, would smash the secular and democratic basis of society - the only possible basis on which socialists and greens can hope to achieve anything, and one that is taken entirely for granted here. Eire is the only western nation where a substantial portion of the Moral Majority's programme has legal sanction: it is now illegal to even counsel women on the desirability or availability of abortion!

I feel betrayed by Steve Dawe's article. I regard it as a scandalous aberration in an otherwise excellent magazine. I'm worried now that the term 'green' is just too vague and ambiguous and signifies nothing of significance.

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CORRECTIONS

In Steve Dawe's article, the last sentence of the section sub-titled 'Hidden History' should have read "This censorship is so significant that it has been the subject of a history" and the penultimate sentence in the section sub-titled 'Disarming the Unionist Opposition' should read "One possibility would be to remove the Unionist majority in the North by restoring Ulster to its original nine counties and then giving Ulster a high degree of autonomy within Ireland."