

GREEN *Line*

No 61 / APRIL 1988 / 60p

- ▶ SEX - NATURE - ECOLOGY
- ▶ RECLAIMING OUR HISTORY
- ▶ DEBT: SUSAN GEORGE REVIEWED
- ▶ THE GREAT U.S. DOPE SWINDLE



WHY CAN'T YOU
STAND ON
YOUR OWN
TWO FEET?

**ACT UP
FOR JOBS**



GREEN Line

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TEL: 0865 245301

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE OF
GREEN POLITICS AND LIFESTYLE

No 61 / APRIL 1988 / 60p

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, bashful Ben Hartsorn and Jerry Spring. Thanks especially to all those who help fold and collate the mag, lick stamps and stuff envelopes - but who don't get a proper mention. You wouldn't get your copy without their work. 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

BULK ORDERS

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.

ADVERTISING

Display advertising is only £75 a page, smaller sizes pro rata, 10% off for cash with copy. Send camera-ready copy by the 10th of the month prior to publication, or enquire for our typesetting and layout charges.

DEADLINES

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

SPECIAL OFFER! BACK ISSUES

Six recent back issues for £2 post free or 20 back issues for £5. Ideal for new subscribers.



Small Ads

5p/word

THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY PARTY: Extra-parliamentary, eco-democratic, symbiotic (which includes feminist), decentralist, internationalist - does not yet exist but is blowing in the wind. No national conference until local core groups have laid the foundations. Join the preparatory network. Contact Peter Cadogan, 3 Hinchinbrook House, Greville Rd, London NW8 5UP Tel: 01 328 3708

LEEDS GREENFAIR APRIL 30th. After the success of the last two years, we again invite people to participate in this year's fair. Stalls available (free), space for workshops, demonstrations or whatever you want to do. Please contact Alison Tomlin, 10 Manor Drive, Leeds 6

TIPIS, handmade to the traditional Sioux design. Order now for Spring delivery. Also 'Tipi Living', 40 pages, illustrated, £2 inc p&p. Full details from: Patrick and Co, Dove Workshops, Butleigh, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8TC 0458 50682

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FOOD FOR EVERYONE. Ten A4 display sheets on the importance of plant foods in solving world food problems £1.00 inc postage.

All from Movement for Compassionate Living the Vegan Way, 47 Highlands Rd, Leatherhead, Surrey
GROWING OUR OWN by Kathleen Jannaway. How to grow healthy food with minimum labour and no artificial or animal products 35p+15p p&p. Movement for Compassionate Living the Vegan Way 47 Highlands Rd, Leatherhead, Surrey.

LOWER SHAW FARM Spring Events:
18-20th MARCH Craft Weekend: Basket making, spinning and rough woodwork.
1-4th APRIL Easter Celebration
15-17th APRIL Games Weekend: Cooperative games, new games, nature games...
29th APRIL-1 MAY May Frolic: Dances, maypole, songs, music...
20-22nd MAY Watercolour Workshop
27-30th MAY Women's Creativity
Wholefood meals. Low cost. See for details to Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, Wilts Tel: 0783 771080

STONEHENGE - Beautiful handmade, 4 colour screen print, (approx 20"x15") saying simply "We want our stones back". Send £1.75 (bulk orders discount: 2-5=10%, 5-10=20%, over 10=30%) Send cheque /P.O. /stamps to Paul Whymark, 37 Divinity Rd, Oxford OX4 1LH

FOR SALE - Wholefood catering van, fully equipped including:- 2 griddles, stove, boiler, bain-Marle etc. 1 year MOT, well maintained reliable motor. Earns £1,000+ per weekend at festivals and events. Offers around £2,500. Contact Judy (0792) 386916 or Heather (0792) 390043

GREEN FAIR St Andrews Parish Centre, Enfield, Saturday 18th April 11 a.m.-4.30 p.m. Environmental and Peace Groups including local FoE's Forest Alert Workshop to include sildeshow on effects of air pollution on the environment, followed by guided walk to see effects first-hand, vegetarian /Vegan food available.

GREEN WEEKENDS
in quiet
countryside
from April
camping and workshops
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£1 per night
details from:-
"GREEN GATHERINGS"
50 macrinders close
maidstone me 207je
tel 77043

Sunflowers

Green Collective Trading

Sunflower T-shirts £4.50; Green Collective post cards 20p each; booklets, £1; envelope re-sealers £2.50 per 100; 'The Greens Are Gathering' badges 25p each; Sunflower stickers ('The Greens Are Gathering', 'Liberate the Earth', 'Animal Liberation', 'Women's Liberation', 'Green CND') 30p each.

Discounts available for bulk orders. Sale or return for green groups, market stalls etc. Send for price list and full details:

'Sunflowers', c/o Ann Gunn, 8 Wordsworth Road, Baintree, Essex CM7 5SX; (0373) 21184.

PRINTED by Will Print

HOW MOORE MEANS LESS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STEALTH AND TOTAL OBSCURITY

DON'T LOOK now but the government's 1986 Social Security Act comes into force on April 11th, and claims made from April Fools Day will come under the new regulations. The advertising campaign heralding the changes asks 'Shouldn't you know the facts?'. It is advisable.

Gone will be Supplementary Benefit, replaced by Income Support, and the much disliked Social Fund will take over from Single Payments. Having already cut the level of expenditure on these from £330 million to around £190 million, John Moore (DHSS Minister) is justified in saying the new Fund, at £203 million for the year from April, is 'generous'. Of this, however, only £60 million will be in the form of grants - the rest is shared between Crisis and Budgeting Loans, which are discretionary and recoverable. Priority will be given to those who are in a position to repay, rather than according to need - an original reworking of the concept of welfare, to say the least. The amount will be deducted weekly from your giro. That is, assuming the budget for the year hasn't been used up (and there have been allegations in Parliament that this budget is being allocated preferentially to areas with Tory MPs). Those applying at the end of the year may find there is no money to have. Community Care Grants are left for situations such as where somebody is likely to end up in an institution. Social Fund Officers make the decision to give a grant or loan. There will be no independent appeal procedure.

These same officers are urged to encourage claimants to "plan their spending in a more positive way." This is essential, if such budgeting is actually possible on the meagre levels of Income Support. The Benefits Research Unit (BRU) at Nottingham University warns that it will be those receiving high additional payments, such as the disabled, who will lose most - and these are the neediest. The DISS calculates that only 35% of claimants will be worse off (one of the declared intentions being to help families with children). The BRU suggests that 60% will lose out, and only 20% will gain. Even those who the government profess to be helping are going to be worse off. Four out of 5 couples with children and 74% of single parents are set to have a reduction in weekly income. Ministers at the DHSS admit that a single mother earning £80 a week will lose over £12, and a family with one earner bringing home £100 stands to lose £10.15. Yet Mrs

Thatcher still asserts that the majority of low-income families will gain.

From next year all 16-17 year olds will have to accept a place on the YTS to receive benefit. Many young people who leave home suffer from traumatic experiences. The YTS is obviously unsuitable, as one project leader pointed out, to those "who do not even care about their own lives." For those excused the YTS, such as young women who are pregnant, the situation gets no

As many of us gather for the Aldermaston memorial demo, the government are busily bankrupting the country's social security system. Green Line reports on the new changes designed to impose the Tories' crass notions of making

LET'S ASK COMMENT

people 'stand on their own two feet' etc etc. It would be nice to see everyone in the green movement on demos to protest at these measures too. There is a particular viciousness about hitting the poorest in this country, so let's make our disgust felt by the politicians.

better. The £19.40 Income Support (lower than present Supplementary Benefit) for under 18's will prevent them from living independently. The Scottish Council for Single Homeless calculates people aged between 18-24 will have nearly £12 a week for food, clothing and personal items. This represents a cut of £9.85.

One reporter remarked that Mrs Thatcher "has achieved the huge redistribution of growing prosperity from poor to rich." Last year saw 42% (up by 6% from 1979) earning below the Council of Europe's

'decency threshold'. At the same time, 19,000 families were living in temporary accomodation in London alone. On the housing issue things look bleak. The Social Fund will make no provision to pay returnable deposits for rented accomodation or fuel bills, as is done at present. Everybody is expected to pay 20% of their rates and all the water rates (some relief is given for the housing rates but this is largely lost by housing benefit changes and personal allowances). It will become increasingly more difficult for young people to move into permanent accomodation. To do so they will need to be seen as suitable for a government loan. Alternatively they will turn to other sources of money. Oxfords Claimants Union were unequivocal, "People will simply go massively into debt." Rent Arrears Officers predict a busy year ahead.

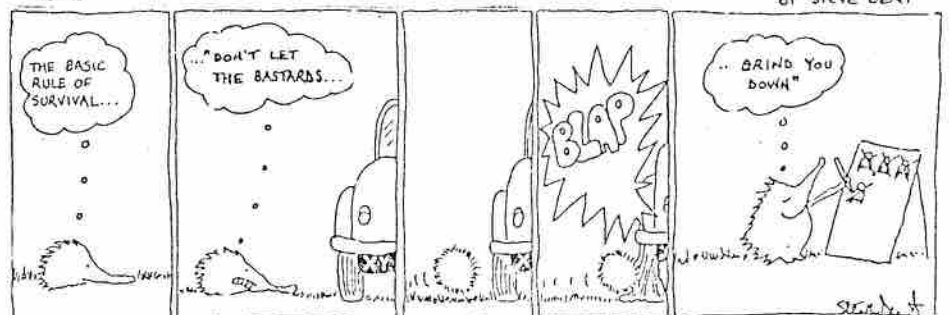
As the Child Poverty Action Group say "instead of claimants being helped towards independence they will be forced into hidden dependence." This will be upon families, friends and charities, as the state takes away another support, one supposedly present to help those who suffer at the hands of the system. Inalienable rights to existence and life are being threatened.

And the good news? If you get to read this in time, claim for everything possible. In 1983 unclaimed means-tested benefit was thought to be £1 billion, over half being due to people other than the present 8 million receiving Supplementary Benefit. Those that are signing on before the legislation comes fully into force will have a period of transitional protection, though this is planned to 'wither' away. Any gains are only likely to offset the loses experienced when Income Support takes over and housing benefit drops.

For more information and advice get in touch with your local Claimants Union or Freeline Social Security 0800 666 555.

from New Ground: Journal of Green Socialism Autumn '87

BY STEVE DENT



MAFF FOOD HIJACK?

MAFF has proposed the establishment of a Government structure to oversee and monitor the organic food standards in the UK, prompted by the rapid increase in the organic food sector, concerns about fraudulent trading and proposals from Brussels for an EEC Directive on Organic Standards. These proposals herald a substantial change in the Government's attitude towards organic agriculture, which will have far reaching consequences, good and bad, for organic producers in Britain.

MAFF intend to establish, under Food From Britain, a board (The United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards) to set organic standards and 'vet' organic sector bodies who offer standards and inspection schemes, such as the Soil Association. The UKROFS Board will nominate a 'producers advisory committee', which will support them and will consist of food producers who have technical expertise and production experience in the various production areas.

Government funding for the scheme will be minimal and most of the funding will probably come from levies paid by producers to FFB in order to be listed on a voluntary register of organic food producers, as well as from inspection charges.

On the plus side, the Government's involvement with organic standards could:-

- * Help unify standards
- * Add extra weight to organic certification and allow the development of official support schemes for organic farmers
- * Help prevent fraudulent trading
- * Encourage more farmers and growers to go organic
- * Harmonize with the impending EEC Directive.

But, on the minus side, the Government scheme will mean that the organic food movement will no longer be in sole charge of setting

and updating organic standards. Out of the nine members on the UKROFS Board only three will be from organic agricultural organizations like the Soil Association (and only one representing consumer organizations), and it looks likely that the controlling influence on the Board will be taken from producers into the hands of the food industry, a familiar story.

There are also, apparently, behind-the-scenes proposals for MAFF to provide an alternative to the Soil Association's inspection and symbol scheme, which could mean the end of the Soil Association's standards and no future control by the organic movement over the preservation of genuine standards.

The Government is certain to go ahead with its proposals and the organic movement is in a quandary over whether to co-operate or not with what is virtually a hijack of organic farming. British Organic Farmers and the Organic Growers Association, after much debate, are prepared to co-operate only if a series of 'sticking points' were established:-

- * That they will seek right or representation by their own chosen person on the board.
 - * That they will expect to see the equivalent of Soil Association used as a base line for all UK standards and that the Soil Association symbol scheme will not be undermined, at least in the short term.
 - * That they will have adequate influence and representation to ensure that the integrity of standards is not undermined by the Board or the advisory committee in future.
- If they can't get the support of the board for the points then BOF and OGA will be forced to pull out and continue with the Soil Association's scheme independently.



WIND & SUN EXHIBITION

The Wind & Sun alternative technology exhibition is again available for bookings at events this Summer. The exhibition features working examples of the latest wind generators and solar panels etc., together with wide-ranging displays on topics such as nuclear power, nuclear disarmament, ecology, renewable energy and alternatives, accompanied by a colourful book and information stall. There are several new displays this year, in particular a larger wind turbine and solar array which means that some power can be supplied for lighting or PA etc if required.

Anyone interested in booking the display should contact Steve Wade as soon as possible so that their events can be included in this year's calendar: 39 Charles St, Oxford OX4 3AU Tel: (0865) 725313

BRIGHTON BIOHAZARD MARCH

April 24th is World Day for Laboratory Animals a date of remembrance for the millions of creatures sacrificed on the altar of scientific (and commercial) progress. This year, the National Anti-Vivisection Society will be marking the day with a march and vigil in Brighton on April 23rd to 24th, against Shamrock Farms, a major importer of primates for the vivisection industry.

A possibly controversial theme in the protest is the potential threat of dangerous viruses being

accidentally released from vivisection laboratories and a suggested link between vivisection and AIDS. The Society published, last year, a controversial book 'The Biohazard Report', which suggested that the AIDS virus might have been accidentally leaked from a laboratory studying certain diseases in animals, and which has had a mixed response in the Green Movement. Is The Biohazard Report a conspiracy theory? Is NAVS jumping on the AIDS bandwagon? One is not sure.

The events kick off at 2pm on the Saturday with a march through Brighton ending at the seafront at 3.30 with a rally and ceremonial planting of crosses at a cenotaph erected for laboratory animals. An evening social is planned and there will be a vigil at the cenotaph from 9pm to dawn on Sunday. Mourning dress or similar wear is suggested for the march.

For further information, contact NAVS, 51 Harley Street, London W1N 1DD, 01 580 4034, or Mike Nunn, 19a Amherst Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN40 1QH.

UNFRIENDLY AEROSOLS

Alternative aerosols not containing CFCs are not without their dangers according to a report in the Daily Telegraph (March 5). 'Ozone-friendly' aerosols currently in use contain hydrocarbon propellants which, although cheaper than CFCs, are inflammable, which is why aerosol manufacturers started using CFCs instead.

ICI has also declared another alternative propellant, CFC-22, to be unsafe. CFC-22 is 20 times less likely to damage the ozone layer but, after 'safety tests' - at the expense of poisoning rats and rabbits - the results of which suggested possible deformities in offspring, ICI have felt that 'in personal products, which stand a good chance of being used by women of child-bearing age, CFC-22 did not offer a sufficient margin of safety'.



NUCLEAR-FREE PACIFIC TOURS

From April 28th to June 17th there will be a tour of England, Scotland and Wales by Joan Wingfield of the Aboriginal Kokotha Peoples Committee, South Australia, and Charlie Ching, from one of Tahiti's indigenous independence and anti-nuclear parties.

Joan wants to speak about the aboriginal situation in Australia today and about BP's treatment of the Kokotha and their land at Roxby Downs (site of one of BP's uranium mines). She talked about this in her evidence to the Sizewell PWR public enquiry in 1984. Charlie Ching has been imprisoned many times by the French Authorities in Paris and Tahiti for his life-long campaigning against French rule in Tahiti and nuclear testing.

The first public meeting will be held on April 28th in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London at 7.30 p.m. As well as Joan Wingfield there'll be speakers from SWAPO and the Transnationals Information Centre. Earlier in the day you can vent your

ON SATURDAY March 20th, history was made as at least 20,500 proud and out lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and their friends took to the streets of Manchester to express their defiance of Clause 28 (now 29). It was the biggest gay march ever to be held in the U.K., and the largest number of people at any rally in Manchester for well over a decade.

The campaign against Clause 29 continues. The government is clearly worried by the growing pressure against the clause: they have moved an amendment in the Lords to delete section C, which refers to financially assisted groups. This is thought to be an attempt to enable non-gay groups like the Samaritans and Citizens Advice Bureaux to help lesbians and gay men. However, lesbian and gay switchboards and centres would be under serious threat for their 'promotion' of homosexuality. Already a Labour council in West Yorkshire has pre-empted Clause 29 by withdrawing an invitation to a lesbian group to take part in a local Women's Day for fear that the group's plans constituted active 'advocacy' of homosexuality; a gay teacher has

been suspended simply for talking about his homosexuality; Reading Matters Bookshop in Haringey has received numerous threats to bomb it, burn it down, and kill the workers: when Haringey Council recently met to discuss a Tory motion to suspend the £25,000 a year grant to the bookshop there were shouts of "Burn it down!" from the public gallery.

The clause now goes to the Commons for a final reading, so it is still necessary to campaign and put pressure on parliament, though it seems almost certain to go through. There will be a major national march in London on SATURDAY APRIL 30th: let's all be there!

BARRY MAYCOCK

Mushroom Bookshop in Nottingham are organising a month of gay literature, film and theatre. Events starting April 6th with novelist Tom Wakefield include writers Ellen Galford and Adam Mars-Jones, cabaret with Parker & Klein, Gay Sweatshop theatre and films like 'Club des Femmes'. Info from Mushroom Bookshop, 10 Heathcote St, Nottingham NG1 3AA (0602) 582506

anger on BP at their AGM in the Royal Albert Hall (where else?). Assemble outside at 10 a.m. Future meetings will be held in the following places: MAY 3rd Cardiff; 5th Blaenau Ffestiniog; 6th Angelsey; 10th Gloucester; 11-12th Bristol; 13th Hereford; 16th Sheffield; 17th Leeds; 18th Newcastle; 23rd Edinburgh; 24th Glasgow; 26th Norwich; 31st Leiston (Sizewell); JUNE 1st Southend; 2nd Ipswich; 3rd Great Yarmouth; 6-10th Newbury, Greenham, S.England; 13-17th London.

* For further information, contact 0272 743224.

There will also be a short tour by Bernice Keldermans, anti-nuclear and pro-constitutionalist campaigner from Belau in Micronesia. She will address public meetings in Sheffield (APRIL 25th), Durham (26th), Manchester (27th) and Birmingham (28th). For further information, contact 0226 766310.

Both tours are organized by Women Working for a Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific. People concerned about the nuclear

exploitation of the Pacific who want to do something about it may be interested in the following contact addresses for WWNFIP around the country:-

- * Bristol NFIP Support Group, c/o 82 Colston Street, Bristol, (0272) 743224/550905.
- * Judy Norton, 86 Blinco Grove, Cambridge CB1 4TS, (0223) 210996.
- * Zohl de Ishtar & Bridget Roberts, 9 Beech Range, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 2EU, (061) 2252014.
- * Glennis Andrews, 411 Manchester Road, Leigh, Lancs., (0942) 605514.
- * London NFIP, Frances Connelly, 61 Ickburgh Road, London E5, 01 806 5935, or Kaye Stearman, 26 Upper Tollington Park, London N4, 01 263 6578.
- * Diane Shanks, 10 The Drive, New Costessey, Norwich, (0603) 742484.
- * Anna Craven, Rose Cottage Flat, Kettlewell, North Yorks., (075676) 265.
- * Jan Symington, 52 Salisbury Road, Crookes, Sheffield S10, (0742) 668-347.

What is BP up to?



What is the Government's record as regards looking after the nation's water supply? Here is a comparison of what the Government is either

LOOKING AFTER OUR WATER?

legally bound to do or has promised to do, with what has actually been achieved (source FoE).

THESE ARE THE GOVERNMENT'S DUTIES

- 1) Supply wholesome drinking water.
- 2) Control water pollution.
- 3) Base environmental standards for dangerous substances in water on the scientific evidence.
- 4) Maintain and improve river quality.
- 5) Comply with the EEC Directive on the quality of water which is suitable for freshwater fish.
- 6) Allow the public to prosecute water authorities for pollution offences.
- 7) Establish public registers at water authority offices containing detailed information about water pollution.
- 8) Conserve wildlife.

AND THIS IS WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS

- * About 5 million people receive tap water which breaches the legal limits set in the EEC Drinking Water Directive.
- * The system for classifying rivers according to water quality is too crude to detect important ecological changes. Monitoring is also inadequate.
- * Key sections of the 1974 Control of Pollution Act are not yet in force.
- * Water authorities have not been granted crucial powers which they want to prevent pollution.
- * Standards are based existing levels of dangerous substances in the environment, rather than the levels needed to protect the environment.
- * There has been a recent overall decline in river water quality in England and Wales.
- * The number of reported water pollution incidents in England and Wales rose from 12,500 in 1980/81 to 19,892 in 1985/86.
- * The number of reported water pollution incidents from farm wastes in England and Wales increased from 1,484 in 1979 to 3,427 in 1986.
- * One quarter of the main sewage works in England and Wales fail to comply with the effluent standards which have been set by the Government.
- * Nearly 1,600 km of the rivers in England and Wales which have been designated under the Directive fail to comply with the standards which it sets.
- * The Government has protected the authorities from prosecution by the public by granting them new relaxed discharge consents for a quarter of main sewage works in England and Wales.
- * The registers are difficult to use, do not contain all the relevant information, and are virtually impossible for most people to visit because they are too far away from where they live.
- * The river quality objectives which are set by water authorities do not recognise wildlife conservation as a legitimate use of rivers.
- * Water authorities often pay lip service to their legal duty to further conservation.

GREEN STUDENTS ARE GATHERING

Following the successful meeting of student greens in Birmingham during March, Leeds SU are holding a gathering of Yorks/Lancs student greens at Leeds University Student Union on Sat. April 30th between 4-6 p.m. during the Leeds 3rd Green Fair. The aim is to build up a network of communication and support between 16 known northern groups. Contact

Adrian for new info and about accommodation at 19 Delphi Mount, Leeds LS6 2HS, tel (0532) 456930
The fair itself will feature some 35 organisations plus displays, entertainment acts and speakers, with food, bar and creche. In the evening there'll be a benefit cabaret & disco towards a women's centre and Leeds FoE.

HUMBERSIDE RAINBOW FESTIVAL

The fourth Annual Humberside Rainbow Festival takes place at Beverley Racecourse on June 5th between 11am and 5pm. The festival is organized by an alliance of peace, green and environmental groups. There will be stalls, bands, theatre, food and drink and a free bus service from Hull. For more details contact John Walford 0482 46954.

GREEN DIARY

APRIL

- 1st. Village Idiots Convention, Assembly Rooms, High St., Glastonbury. All Fools Day Market: crafts, stalls, buskers. Evening entertainment from 7pm, incl. Daevid Allen, the George & Dragon Mummies, the Particle Martian Experience & more: admission £1.50. Money to Comic Relief & Travellers Skool Bus Project.
- 7th. World Health Day.
- 11th-16th. New University: Skills and Knowledge Sharing Week. Contact New University, 24 South Road, Hockley, Birmingham B18, (021) 551 1679.
- 13th. The Academic Inn. Nicholas Hildyard, co-editor of The Ecologist talks on Sienna - How an Ideal City Works.

- 21st. Anarchist Communist Federation. Meeting, 8pm, Marchmont Street Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1.
- 22nd-24th. Conference "Of Presidents and Present Danger" (US Imperialism in the 1990s). Offers of help & further details: Ankie Hoogvelt, Sheffield 663962.
- 23rd-30th. Environment Week. Details: Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW, or, UK2000, 2-3 Horse & Dolphin Yard, Off Macclesfield St., London W1V 7LG, 01 631 5160, or FOE.
- 23rd. Rainforests Day of Action. Details FOE 01 490 1555. Plan those actions now!
- 25th-June 27th. Lecture tour by speakers for a nuclear-free and independent Pacific. Details in Network.27th. Chernobyl Day. Actions everywhere (?). Contact FOE 01 490 1555.

- 30th. Demo against Dungeness. Contact Steve Dawe, 12 Clyde St., Canterbury CT1 1NA, (0227) 456226. Also demo against Hinckley C. Assemble at power station 11am. Details Danielle (0278) 422632.

MAY

- 2nd. Festival For Freedom - London. Site to be announced: details BM Box CFZ, London WC1 3XX. Be there or be ultraspectable!
- 5th. Anarchist Communist Federation. Meeting: subject - "Future Society". Marchmont St. Community Centre, Marchmont St., London WC1, 8pm.
- 7th. Dayschool by Campaign the Namibian Uranium Contract, in London. Details Phil Boyd, CANUC, PO Box 16, London NWS 2LW, 01 267 1941/2.



Debt: The Third World War

The hut is sinking in the mud near the bridge over the River Guaibe in Porto Alégro, Brazil. A woman social worker is welcomed by five children, the oldest about 8 years old. The parents have gone out foraging in the garbage heaps. Noticing how poorly the children look, the social worker asks them whether they have eaten recently.

"Yes miss, yesterday Mummy made little cakes from wet newspapers."

"What? Little cakes from what?" asks the woman.

"Mummy takes a sheet of newspaper, makes it into a ball and soaks it in water and when it is nice and soft kneads it into little cakes. We eat them, drink some water and feel nice and full inside."

(from *A Fate Worse Than Debt*, p.137)

WE,VE ALL HEARD what the debt crisis means for the snivelling bankers and the 'world economy'. Well, here is a book that specifically sets out to open our eyes as to what it means for ordinary people in the debtor countries. That's what, in the words of the cover blurb, makes this 'a radical new analysis' of the debt crisis. And, as with any book by Susan George, I read *A Fate Worse Than Debt* with increasing rage at the logical absurdities and immorality of global capitalism. She is a writer, thankfully, who doesn't hide her own utter contempt for those faceless, over-fed men (usually) who sign away the lives and futures of millions of the poorest of the world's poor in the name of self-interested economic dogma. And, given the author's knowledge of development issues, it is unsurprising that, whilst the book is ostensibly about the debt crisis, it ends up becoming a timely and devastating indictment of the whole way the world is run on our behalf. I strongly urge you to go out and lay hands on a copy, one way or another.

• Crisis? What Crisis?

So why do we - in the rich world that is - talk of 'crisis'? After all the total debt accumulated over 15 years is only \$1 trillion. That's 10% of annual global economic activity, or about 30% of the annual turnover of the world's top 200 transnational corporations (TNCs). Debt has enabled the North "to keep a check on any real pretensions to independence on the part of the South and to ensure privileged access to the South's resources and to its industrial base, at the cheapest terms."

Thus we have benefited from an unparalleled collapse in the cost of industrialism's raw materials: in 1985 commodity prices (including oil and gold) had sunk to an index level of 66 compared to 100 in 1957; Third World labour too, is currently sold for starvation wages with impoverished debtor nations actually reducing TNCs' (and our) costs through government food subsidies in their desperation to attract hard currency export industries. Latin America alone handed over a net \$106bn to the rich between 1980 and 1985 while the South's share of world trade fell over a similar period. There has been a down side; namely, the loss of 2-3 million jobs, usually among the lower paid of course, in Europe and the US as the debtor nations as importers effectively dropped off the map while simultaneously undercutting northern farmers and manufacturers in a vain attempt to meet their interest repayments.

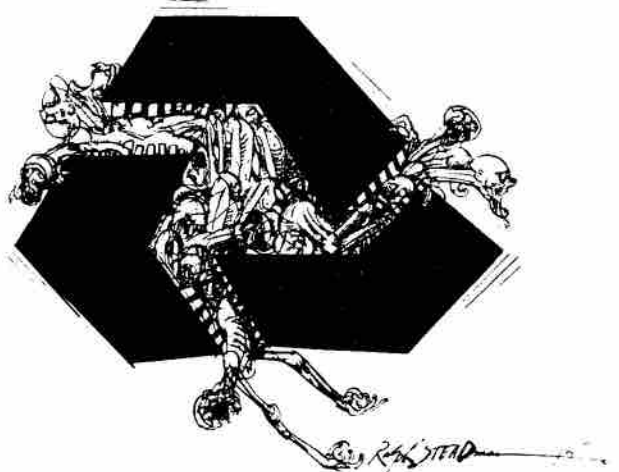
Under the debt crisis, all ordinary people lose, whether in debtor nation or lender nation. But for our geopoliticians this a small price to pay for the benefits to them of the present situation. Susan George christens the imperialistic effect of debt, FLIC - Financial Low Intensity Conflict: the new partner to Low Intensity Conflict that the US has been waging around the world since Vietnam (e.g. in Nicaragua). As one on the receiving end, Luis 'Lulu' Silva puts it more graphically:

"Without being radical or overly bold, I will tell you that the Third World War has already started - a silent war, not for that reason any the less sinister. This war is tearing down Brazil, Latin America and practically all the Third World. Instead of soldiers dying there are children; instead of millions of wounded there are millions of unemployed; instead of destruction of bridges there is the tearing down of factories, schools, hospitals, and entire economies ...It is a war by the United States against the Latin American continent and the Third World. It is a war over the foreign debt, one which has as its main weapon interest, a weapon more deadly than the atom bomb, more shattering than a laser beam."

Now the crucial point about FLIC is that the aim is parasitic: in this conflict, the enemy is to be bled but not defeated. It is more a way of running the world than a real war, although the effects are the same. And so we come to the real reason for talk of 'crisis' in the boardrooms and Cabinets of the North. For the world's ruling clique the 'crisis' is simply a dread that the whole rotten, suppurating capitalist carcass might crash to the ground, most likely bringing war in its wake.

• Banking on disaster

Undoubtedly the biggest beneficiaries are the large 'money-centre' banks. Whilst they are highly exposed if the debtor nations did ever combine to threaten default (not a good idea in any case), these greasy usurers are making a fortune out of the debt crisis. Debtor nations are currently failing to pay back even the interest, let alone the principle, on their debts. So the profits should be rolling in for years, especially as dollar interest rates go through the roof to finance the US budget deficit over the next decade.



And if you're a banker, you can have your cake and eat it too (or three times). Susan George describes several nice little earners. For example, sizeable proportions of the money lent arrives straight back in the bank via the suitcases of corrupt elites in the debtor nations, whereupon it is lent to the debtor again ...and again. The figures for capital flight are astounding. Between 1979 and 1984 60% of capital inflow to Argentina disappeared back out of the country. Citibank of the US is reckoned to hold \$26 billion for Latin Americans, which compares to a total loan exposure to Latin America's largest debtors of only \$10bn. So Citibank, while screwing Latin American economies into the ground, is actually a net borrower from those 'debtors'.

When things do get a little tough then the IMF usually steps in and arranges a mixed package of state and private loans to the debtor. Now this is also nice for the bankers since the proportion they are forced to finance of the new package is generally significantly smaller than their share of the original loans. In effect, state money (i.e. yours and mine) is being handed over to the banks via the debtor to subsidise their profits. This is rather strange, since I was always taught that one of the tingling thrills of capitalism lay in taking risks - and the consequences. However, it appears that the money-centre bankers are no longer held responsible for their earlier lending policies. On the other hand, the smaller banks, the ones that can help you and me, have not been bailed out, and in the US, regional and farm banks have been going under in record numbers.

The banks have recently been allowing debtor governments to set aside debt by selling their industrial base to the banks, or sometimes the TNCs that the banks are acting for. The North thus gets control of vital industries at knock-down prices but the debtor will clear only a minute fraction of the debt. And, if all this weren't enough, bankers have the bumptious gall to charge outrageous fees for rescheduling loan repayments - rescheduling that serves merely to protect a bank's own credibility and keep the debtor chained up for yet another decade. So now you know what lies behind all those smug, self-satisfied bank advertisements that have proliferated over the last couple of years.

• International Ministry of Finance

Susan George does not hold up the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the chief villain of the debt crisis. Moreover, she specifically rules out any diabolic conspiracy theory regarding the IMF, World Bank and North and South elites. I found this very surprising because at several points in her book she seemed to present prima facie evidence of one. She contents herself with the idea of a 'Consortium' of interests whose individual actions coincidentally help each other simply because they have a common aim; viz, global capitalism.

For Susan George the IMF is merely a front, a tool, of the real powerbrokers - the banks, the US government and the OECD Group of Ten (G10). She goes so far as to absolve individual IMF consultants and economists of blame (though not of arrogance and stupidity) as they're only carrying out orders. This is disappointing. I thought we'd dealt with this once and for all at Nuremburg. And, let's be clear; we are talking about IMF (and World Bank) sponsored genocide and ecocide on an unprecedented scale. Every two days the equivalent of the Hiroshima bomb drops on the barrios and rural villages of the world's disenfranchised poor, needlessly killing 15 -20 million people every year and maiming countless others. All the hard-won gains in health, nutrition and education are being thrown away. The welfare of people in the South is beginning to go backwards after consistent improvement since 1945.

It made me realise that, in one sense, all the media and especially political hype over the Sahel famine was a gigantic con, a diversion. As presented, the prevailing impression was of a biblical, natural disaster compounded by feckless Communist governments. Sure, there was

disgust at the size of EEC food mountains and Tory meanness but this missed the point - which is why the Sahel famine was a legitimate target for the North's munificent pity. The real (invisible) issue was that, at the same time, Africa was paying out about four times more in debt repayments than it was getting in aid. In Latin America millions were also struggling in absolute destitution as net transfers of over \$100 billion were made to the rich countries. So the Sahel famine was actually an IMF famine. But there was no 'debtor aid' concerts - although Band Aid, to give them credit, did film a strongly political advert linking famine and debt repayment. It was never shown. A historical opportunity to show how world capitalism operates was lost.

It is the IMF which, unelected, unaccountable, imposes 'adjustment' on recalcitrant debtors. By declaring a country uncreditworthy, it has the power to break a nation - as it has indeed tried to do on numerous occasions (for example, when Alan Garcia of Peru chose to limit debt repayments to 10% of export earnings). IMF power is used in a highly partisan manner, particularly to bring radical, reforming governments to heel and reward right-wing supporters of the US. But this is hardly surprising since the 1944 charter of the IMF lays down that it is to promote free-market capitalism throughout the world. And the US, through its block vote, has an effective veto on IMF actions (as seen in the IMF treatment of Nicaragua).

Susan George shows convincingly that the IMF's 'austerity' programmes simply do not work - even when, as in Jamaica - the debtor government has given it a free hand for a decade. And anyone except the blinkered sado-monetarists that dominate the IMF's thinking can see that it can't. Basically, the idea is to export for hard currency and cut domestic demand and all welfare policies at home. But, when a group of countries, each selling a similar limited range of agricultural and mineral commodities expand their exports simultaneously, the price for those commodities drops into the basement. Susan George cites case after case where a country has ended up with less earnings despite increasing exports, sometimes by over 100%.



In addition, the effects of IMF policies on producers in the North has led to increasing protectionism. For instance, Brazil's highly successful computer industry has in recent years succeeded in overtaking IBM as Brazil's main supplier. So in 1986 a US government official was duly dispatched to threaten trade reprisals. Thus, US protectionism extends into other countries' domestic economies and Brazil is expected to pay off its debt and waste hard currency buying IBM computers! This is only a bad example of a general trend of politicians in the North shirking their responsibilities in the present situation. If they find the domestic implications of IMF austerity measures too unpleasant then they should change what the IMF does.

The middle section of Susan George's book is a deeply depressing litany of disaster, largely caused by the imposed policies of the IMF. IMF workers (and their political masters) cannot be unaware of the misery and destruction they are causing. It seems that for them it is all an

exciting little economic experiment of putting into practice their bizarre free-market fantasies regardless of the human and environmental costs. The IMF destroys democracy and human rights and through its partner in crime, the World Bank, is destroying whole cultures and ecosystems as well. I cannot forgive the people responsible for such atrocities. One day I hope they'll be brought to account.



• Turning the tables on the rich

In all of this there are tiny chinks of light. As well as the solidarity shown by some groups and individuals in the North, in the debtor countries, Susan George has been told of numerous instances of self-help and self-organisation by those people totally ignored (except when they riot) by debtor governments more answerable to the IMF than to their own nation. One debtor government does get special praise though: that of Alan Garcia of Peru. His brave stand of switching to the policies of the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation has resulted in ostracism by the IMF and no support from other politicians in Latin America. At last there is someone who has recognised that countries like Peru must be built on the base of the small rural farmers; that Peru must become as self-sufficient as possible. As Garcia says (p.218):

At this moment when hundreds of millions of people in Latin Africa, Asia and Latin America are waiting in vain for food, when poverty and violence loom over our societies, the banks can wait. The poor have waited long enough for reason and justice ...We are not going to sacrifice Peru's historical development and its people's food to the appetites and proposals of the International Bank ...It will take a long time, but we are going to replace the food products we consume today by those that Peru's land can produce.

What this means too, is that Peru's indigenous people will finally be given the status and recognition that their knowledge and cultures deserve.

For Susan George, the only way forward - and she makes a good case - is simply to reverse the root causes of the debt crisis. The first of these is an adherence to a thoroughly disreputable model of 'development' based on economic growth, comparative advantage (i.e. specialize in what you can best produce), trickle-down wealth redistribution and all-out agricultural and industrial modernisation. Despite the gains made by some in the South, this model has failed. It merely creates elites, desperate poverty and neo-colonial dependency. The second root cause of the crisis is the lack of democracy; that is, real democracy, not the pompous centralized sham of Westminster-style politics. Susan George takes time to explain how the debt built up and, whilst the reasons are complex, a large part was played by unaccountable regimes throwing money away on absurd grandiose projects, military expenditure, useless consumer goods or outright

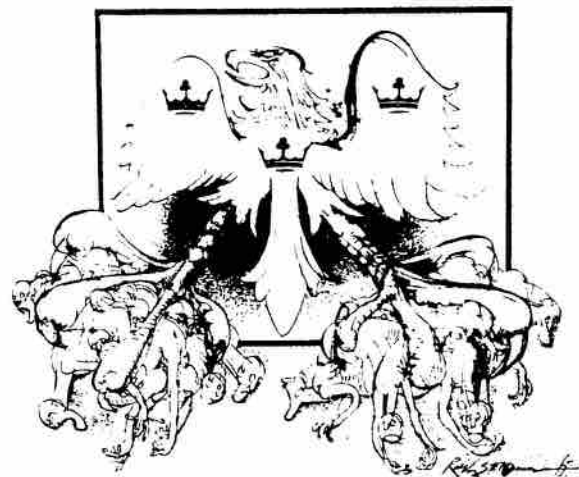
corruption. The rural people were the last to be consulted, if ever. Yet, through their agriculture, they ought to have been the very backbone of post-colonial independence.

So the task is to reverse the processes of mal-development and unaccountability. This is to be done by radicalising the IMF notion of 'conditionality' which currently means that debtors get loans if they conform to IMF economic theories and fiscal targets. Instead loans will be contingent on use for true development and democratic reform. Countries would be allowed to write off debt by performing development tasks of equivalent worth. Rich governments could meet the debt. Debtors would refuse to repay banks until the money stolen by corrupt officials with the connivance of the banks was returned. Commodity exports could be counted against debt at set reasonable prices rather than the uncontrollable market valuation. These though are just sketches of Susan George's wide-ranging ideas. You must read it for yourself.

I would like to have seen more on how we in the North will have to adjust our lifestyles to bring her 3-D model (Debt, Development, Democracy) to fruition. And, given her earlier comments on FLIC and the Consortium, she can be criticised for appearing to underestimate the resistance that the world's rulers will put up if her proposals were ever implemented, or even seriously considered. However, that is no reason for all of us not to try. As Susan George concludes (p.262):

We must all take a stand; declining to take one out of ignorance, indifference or cowardice can only reinforce the status quo. We can allow the guardians of the ruling model free rein and consent to their command over us all, or we can refuse. We can submit to the present global disorder or reject it. We can acquiesce to power, and to the ideology that undergirds it, or fight back, one way or the other. The debt crisis is a symptom - one among many - of an increasingly polarized world organised for the benefit of a minority that will stop at nothing to maintain and strengthen its control and its privilege. The way in which this crisis is resolved will be one sign of the success or failure of that minority. No one who cares about freedom can afford to be absent from the battle, for we are all on the field. Whether we live in the North or the South, it is the shape of our own lives and those of our children that is at stake, like it or not. The old paradigm may entrench its control and win. But we are also present at the birth of a new one, and millions have chosen to protect, nurture and sustain it. For such a revolution many have already given their lives. My own choice is clear: the only honour is to make common cause with them.

• JERRY SPRING



Thanks to War on Want Campaigns and Leeds Postcards for permission to use Ralph Steadman's moderate depictions of the bank logos. They were drawn for the campaign to highlight the banks' role in world poverty and are still available as postcards.

THE NATURE OF... an expression that promises to grasp both the core and the totality of its subject. In fact, what follows is only a glance at this imponderable 'nature'. But why 'nature' at all? Because 'nature' appears at the crux of the sexual conflict. Because I write from a position that is deemed 'unnatural'. Because of the presumption, which gives point to my argument, that the nature of heterosexuality is 'nature' itself.

From time immemorial, it seems, a steady law has held fast: in the sexual sphere, the good equals the natural. Does the sheer persistence of this law point beyond the historical enquiry? Does it represent a universal truth? Not quite: for the term 'nature' has its own history. This history richly informs the 'nature' which heterosexuality today lays claim to, and it therefore demands to be understood.

• The History of 'Nature'

In our own time, the word has two broad senses: the total contents of the universe, as in 'the laws of nature'; and the inherent quality of a thing, as in 'the nature of...'. And there is a further sense of 'nature', captured in the expression 'the love of nature'.

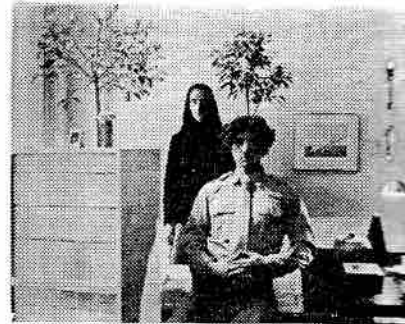
Nature to the Greek, Roman and Medieval mind was fundamentally organic. While for us, matter is first of all mineral, and only by some mysterious secondary effect gives birth to the swarm of life, for our ancestors, rocks and stones were the slothful organs of an animal planet. In the animate world each entity fulfils a purpose which is intrinsic to its nature.

So far as sex is concerned, the crucial legacy of Greek thinking is the identification of nature with purpose. However, this involves us in an ambiguity. Modern science, and hence in a sense modern consciousness, founded itself on the rejection of explanation by purpose. Stones no longer fly, they're pushed - if nothing pushes them they just sit there: principle of inertia. We have learnt to ask, 'What made this happen?' rather than, 'To what end does this happen?'

So how has 'nature' as we use it today, retained its earlier teleology - its sense of predetermined purpose? The answer lies in biology, the field of knowledge invoked by conservative sexual propaganda, the Achilles heel of the scientific revolution, and the living shrine of an archaic concept of 'nature'. Darwin's ambition was to qualify his science, biology, for membership of a Newtonian universe where the only cause is a past cause. His theory of natural selection explains the illusion of purpose in terms of an arbitrary collision: the struggle for life, individual variants, and environmental changes. However, one realises that the whole text of Darwin's definitive work, The Origin Of Species is rotten with the language of intention, and few modern biologists bother to avoid the vocabulary of use, gain and goal which they have neither the means nor the desire to defend. The fact is, if a new enzyme is discovered in the leaf of a flower, biological science addresses one over-riding question: what is it for?

If Darwin had succeeded, if modern biology were as rigorously mechanistic as it claims to be, there could be no argument between a natural and a social portrait of the world. In fact, of course, such argument is characteristic of numerous debates - economic, racial and sexual. The contest requires some form of common ground, and this is provided by teleology. In other words, it is impossible to describe either organic or social reality without referring, sooner or later, to the ends to which things move. The biological and the human spheres are both of them dense with aims.

The 'nature' of heterosexuality is none other than the 'nature' which has governed the long history of the sexual norm: a 'nature' characterised, even today, by purpose. And this makes possible a running battle between social and biological justifications - the routine



What's natural about Heterosexuality?

pattern of contemporary dispute: is the benefit of competition species survival, or class advantage? Are men aggressive in the service of an adaptive or a political end? And heterosexuality - is it the benign implement of a tending nature, or the blunt instrument of masculine tyranny?

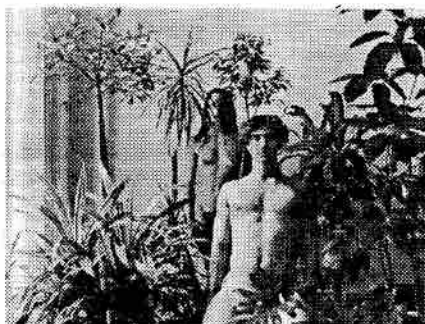
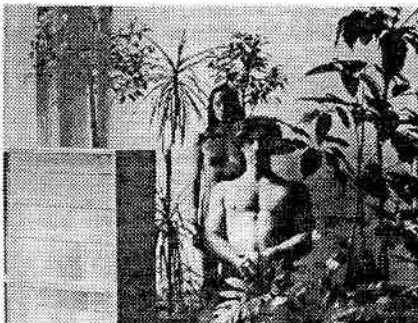
The convention among progressive thinkers is to side with the social against the natural. Gay thinkers today are among the most eager participants in this epic combat, and there is no doubt as to where the gay colours are to be pinned. 'Historical' becomes almost synonymous with 'radical', while 'nature' encapsulates everything to be rebutted, deconstructed, restricted and diminished. Only a fool would deny that nature has a place; but the point is, to keep it there.

The price of this strategy is a price of understanding. Consider the complaint that rings through the past nineteen centuries against the practice of homosexual intercourse: 'It's unnatural!' Historical analysis may prove that what appeared inscribed by nature was actually scribbled by a human hand. But can it grasp virulence? Have we yet registered the hysteria, the violence, about the fascination with which that ageless expression 'contra natura' invested? Why does the appeal to 'nature' so permeate the sexual field? What is the secret of that brutal nausea evoked, even today, by the term 'unnatural'? My answer would be: the very rupture which separates history from nature. This is the wound that normative sexuality seeks to heal. But the antithesis, the rupture, of the social and the natural is no sooner established than it is compromised by its naked and obtrusive presence. My body, in its chemistry, its strivings, its reflexes and its hungers is incontestably continuous with the world. But - how far am I continuous with my body, and therefore with nature?

'Sex' arises here as a way to characterise the body, and hence the embodied person. To account for the body in sexual terms is to put it in the world in a certain way. And the position is quite different from that implied by, say, an economic account. And, in so far as heterosexuality lays claim to the heart of sexual reality, to be what sex properly presumes at the same time to dictate the form of the relationship between the self and the world. So the question is: how has sex been used to articulate our being-in-the-world?

Heterosexuals tend to appear confident in the naturalness of their sexuality. But is human heterosexuality really natural, and what infact do we mean by 'natural' in the first place? How too can we explain the extraordinary virulence with which homosexuality is attacked? In his chapter for Heterosexuality eds. Gillian Hanscombe & Martin Humphries (GMP publishers 1987) JON WARD, writing from a gay perspective, has provided some answers and has gone on to argue that current sexual norms represent a desperate attempt to be rejoined with nature in the face of industrial and urbanised alienation and ecological destruction. We present an edited extract here.

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• Sex as safari

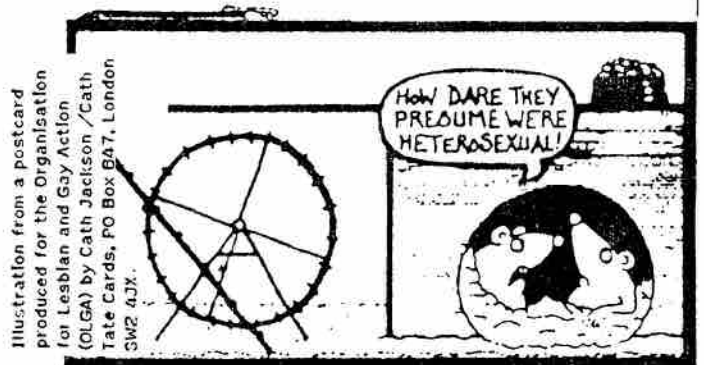
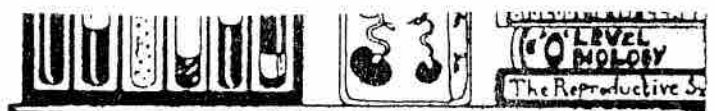
In the West, the past century has been characterised by a collapse in religious belief, and by a drastic spread of urbanisation: the industrial revolution inflicted a violent dislocation, wrenching humanity from a proximate, if uneasy, relation to the natural environment. And with the passing of religious consensus there is no universal language through which to redefine our position. In this situation, sex has assumed a mystic, and mystifying, importance. Today, it is easier to escape the voice of God than to hold oneself aloof from the daily barrage of sexual imagery and exhortation. Sex today is not a religion - that would be a facile equation - but it has flooded into many of the spaces which religion has vacated.

Sex, infact, has become our allotment in the heart of the city, our little square of heath. To make love, we fling off our clothes, abandoning the signs which mark us as civilised: law, art and language. This is what makes sex startling, like hair growing on a telephone. And precious - the very last of our savings from a lost affluence. Sex, then, has been appointed as the domain - finite, controllable, nameable - within which we can experience ourselves as at once natural and human: that is, as beings continuous with the world beyond culture's indiscernible edge.

The decline of religion and the rise of the industrial city have given a new poignancy to the status accorded to sexuality. But they do not account for it. This is because the formula 'good sex is natural sex' is as old as Christianity; and it can be tracked into the deeper past of Classical Greek philosophy. This implicit historical consensus masks its arbitrary character. What we know as 'sex' has no existence independent of the cultural values which define it, order it and present it to consciousness. The biological reality is contaminated through and through with social meanings. The unasked question is: why is the good identified with the natural in relation to sex? Why not in respect of transport, or music, or truth?

A heterosexual friend to whom I mentioned that I was writing this essay supplemented his words of encouragement with a warning: 'It's all very well, you know, but you can't argue with biology.' Has he never fried an egg? The whole of human history is an 'argument with biology'. The very civilisation which the most homophobic ideologues are eager to defend is the antithesis of nature: law and art.

This logical oddity is most transparent when appeals are made to the animal kingdom. The animals serve simultaneously as the model of sexual decorum, and the very type of debasement. Thus the self-annointed 'defender' of heterosexuality: "Human sexuality is a continuum of nature. Unless we understand this, we are in danger of becoming lower animals only." Herein lies the mystery of the sexual prohibitions. The crime of sodomy represents at once a descent to the pigsty, and the failure to behave like a proper pig.



The point is this: that the natural ethic, taken to its logical conclusion, would cancel humanity altogether. Hence it is confined, in a transparently irrational fashion, to the sexual field. Human sexuality is proclaimed a 'continuum of nature' - not human government, or human poetry, or human aviation, or human gateau. AIDS is 'nature's retribution'; a collapsing tower block isn't. Where it is promulgated, the law of nature is absolute, and carries the power of life and death. But it is only promulgated on one or two territories: pre-eminently, sex. The assumption on which the heterosexual imperative founds itself is radically inconsistent.

● The fascination of sex

But still the question is: why sex? What is it about sexuality that selects it as almost uniquely the field of the 'natural' and so conceals this selection as to make it appear self-evident? How is the nature of sex turned into the sovereignty of nature?

Classically speaking, the nature of a thing, its inner truth, is given by its purpose. When sexuality is challenged in these terms, the response appears self-evident. The purpose of sex is procreation. Yet this self-evident answer begs the question. It is the answer which arises from already positioning human sexuality in the wider physical world - among the plants and animals of external nature - as opposed to locating it in the field of human history, that is, the history of human purposes.

It is true that the procreative function has conventionally decided between 'natural' and 'unnatural' sexual practice, and today lends its authority to heterosexual supremacy. But sex has always offered itself for other uses - recreation, domination, profit, romance... Repositioned among the laws and artefacts of culture, sex is no more self-evidently for procreation than the mouth is for eating, rather than singing hymns (or French kissing).

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No, procreation alone does not explain why sex is selected as the field of the natural. This is confirmed by contemporary experience: millions of people use contraceptives without compunction (pace the Vatican) but retain their disgust at the 'unnaturalness' of homosexual activity. What they find 'natural' in their heterosexuality is not, or not only, the production of babies.

But there is another reason why we set Eros on the side of 'nature', and against the machine: sex is also lust. To characterise sex as 'the truth of our being' is to identify our being with our desires. Desire is desire for. It leans out of its own window. It hails what is beyond itself. Retrospectively, the neurologist, the behaviourist, or the historian may construct past causes for my sexual acts. But in the moment of lust, I am all future. Sexual longing is as teleological, purposeful, in character as the flora and fauna of the Galapagos. Indeed, of all our material needs, sex is singular in its imperviousness to technical transformation, and hence to the history which technology gives rise to. As Marx observed, 'the hunger which is gratified by cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth.' Stubbornly palaeolithic, sex is as raw today as it ever was. You can't cook fellatio. Be it 2,000 BC or 2,000 AD, you just suck.

● Homophobia versus the planet

So what is the truth of the matter? Is sex infact the privileged avenue from culture to nature? Or is it merely a sign that has been erected in the hope - or the despair - of completing that ineffable journey? No hesitation here: the sexual norm represents a fatuous attempt to square the circle described by 'nature'. And the fatuity has grown in proportion to the recent aggrandisement of sexual discourse.

The quest which sex has been commanded to serve is for a reconciliation of the human and the natural; and this 'natural' embraces a double sense; both the body and the world it inhabits. In respect of the latter, however, a whole new problem has arisen - one that lies far beyond the grasp of any conceivable sexual terminology. In the course of the past few decades, the external basis of human existence has been thrown into peril.

The threat of ecological catastrophe that distinguishes this century lies outside the scope of my discussion, but is nevertheless its proper context. The suicidal ravages now being inflicted on our living habitation, lend an entirely new dimension to the significance of 'nature'. The crisis requires that a new subtlety be brought to the uses made of this term, an attitude of care and questioning which surpasses the routine antinomies of current debates.

For radical thinkers to perpetuate a vulgar chauvinism - 'history, not nature' - in the name of sexual liberation is to risk disarmament in the struggle to redeem the environment. And while the surrender to 'nature' proposed by the sexual norm is untenable, the disparagement of 'nature' cultivated by radical historicism may collude with history's destruction. The birds and the bees of heterosexual mythology are risible; but in many parts of the globe, real birds and bees are threatened with extinction. In that case, might not a return to 'natural' sexuality herald the beginning of a healthier accommodation to the biosphere? Could heterosexuality be relaunched as a kind of erotic vegetarianism?

To argue this would be to misunderstand the spirit of the sexual norm, which is fundamentally whimsical. It bears an antithetical, not an exemplary relation to the civilised world: in bed we are the more animal, so that out of it we may be less so. The ethic of sexual normality - the good is the natural - is untransferrable to human culture precisely because, in its absoluteness, it denies

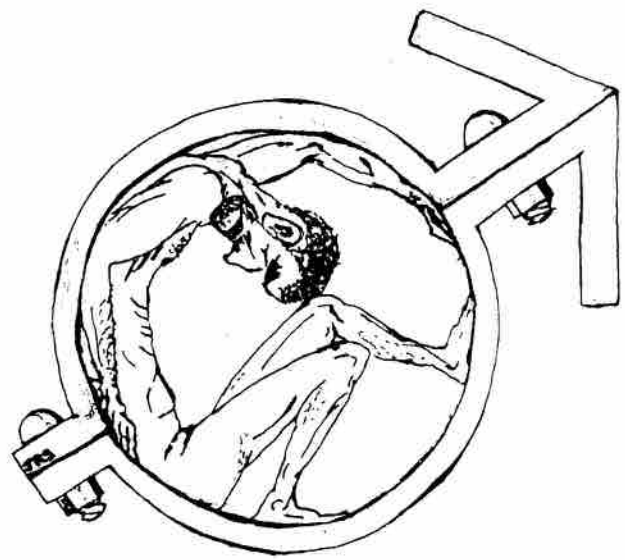
the possibility of culture. 'Heterosexuality', as the norm is now called, has the conservative function of a fiesta: a ritual regression to untransformed nature which distracts us from the poison of our constructed environment. It is the official nature reserve that sanctions the surrounding devastation. As such it does not spread its natural values, but hoards them jealously. The myth of 'natural love' is purely gestural, like a potted plant in an asbestos factory.

There is urgent need of a new contract with the natural world from which we draw breath. The 'heterosexual' ideal cannot model this contract. On the contrary, it stands in the way, because it refuses to admit the necessary sense in which to be human is not to be continuous with nature. This truth, sad and hard, ought to be grasped once and for all, without nostalgia and without violence.

There is not, and never was, an Eden. No singularity of being-in-the-world is available: neither through primitive regression nor through technological mastery. The totality of nature and the totality of history are spectral empires engaged in a spectral battle. The reality is partial, torn, indefinite and unpossessable: we are out of place, strangers in our own home. This is the context in which the sexual crisis, and equally the ecological crisis, needs to be confronted. So far as I can see, the only credible objective, modest and incomplete, is an endless, gradually improving negotiation between the human and the natural - within and without us.

What is the appropriate language of this negotiation? The science of biology, in its failure to accommodate the mechanical universe, suggests the terms in which the human and the non-human can converse. The 'natural given' is not a given object, nor a given force, but a given purpose. I do not mean, of course, the monolithic purpose of a divine plan, but the myriad, highly specific purposes that interlock to compose the biosphere. Each species, as Aristotle observed, contains its end within itself.

At the same time, purpose is the raw material of human action, of human politics. There are purposes we create, and purposes we discover within and around us. We cannot identify our purposes with those of the animals and the plants: that's the reactionary sentimentality of 'natural' sex. Nor is there any hope left in the mastery of nature - a wholesale subjugation of all natural purposes to our own such as underwrites the Marxist promise. The need is rather to inhabit, and observe, a multiplicity of ends whose inter-relations shift constantly, in response to natural accident and our own interventions.



To my understanding, no fixed rules can govern our participation in this matrix: not in the sexual sphere, nor in any other. In our negotiation between natural and human objectives, we simply have to see what works. For example, consider the purpose of the penis. Biologically speaking, it's quite obvious that the relation of the penis to the vagina is not equivalent to the relation of the penis to the anus (or mouth, or armpit). Apart from its urinary function, the penis is for inserting into the vagina to deliver semen. That is its 'nature', its given purpose. But without harm, I've invested mine with a different purpose - pleasure and love.

But should such an investment be at all restricted? Isn't an equivalent shift of purpose possible in a heterosexual coupling? Could heterosexuality not be rescued from the 'ancien regime' of 'nature'? One imagines here a re-presentation of male-female intercourse as a freely chosen option, claiming no privilege among erotic games because its relation to biological function has been transformed from one of determination to one of coincidence. I believe this is the only tenable future for heterosexuality.

But liberty is indivisible in the sexual sphere as everywhere else. So long as lesbians and gay men suffer the assaults of its 'natural' pretensions, heterosexuality will remain a prison - even for the nicest warders. Freedom for heterosexuals will only be found where those whom they have oppressed are already seeking it: on that uneasy margin of the natural world which is called the human condition.

PEACE DIARY

APRIL 1-4: London - Aldermaston March. Also, star marches from Llanishen, Kent, Portsmouth.

APRIL 4: Encircle the base at Aldermaston.

12 noon. Coaches and cars arrive at Aldermaston. Pin your dove to the fence!

1.30 pm: Marchers arrive - let's hope the timing is right. It would be painful to have to sprint the last half a dozen miles.

2.00 pm: Once a human chain has formed around the fence, we then make lots of noise. This certainly makes a change from a silent vigil - far more therapeutic.

2.30 pm: Mini-rallies around the base, with music, speakers, etc.

3.30 pm: End of the action. We all pile back into our coaches.

APRIL 2: Peace on Earth Rally, sponsored by the National Peace Council: at George Cadbury Hall, Bristol Rd, Birmingham 29. Details from: Selly Oak Peace Council, c/o NPC, Gt James St, London WC1N 3ES.

APRIL 7: Talking Sanity: Europe in the 21st century - what are we aiming at? Public meeting, Camden Town Hall basement, Euston Rd, NW1, 7.30 pm.

APRIL 16-MAY 22: Exhibition: A world's waste - Cumbria, Sellafield and nuclear reprocessing. At the Metropole Arts Centre, The Leas, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2LS. Tel: 0303 55070.

APRIL 19: Talking Sanity: Europe and World. Camden Town Hall basement, Euston Rd, NW1.

APRIL 23: National Snowball Action at Corsham. The Snowball campaign can be contacted c/o 48 Bethel St, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1NR (tel: 0603 631007). Corsham is the Government War HQ, where the commands to use nuclear weapons will most likely be used.

APRIL 26-27: Key meeting of NATO defence

ministers - the NATO Nuclear Planning

Group (NPG) - at Kolding, Denmark. On the

agenda is 'modernisation' (i.e. escalation):

more nuclear artillery, sea-launched

cruise missiles, air-launched cruise

missiles, new ground-launched missiles,

etc, etc, seemingly without end. Various

protest actions, lobbying, etc, are

planned. Contact CND: 01.250 4010.

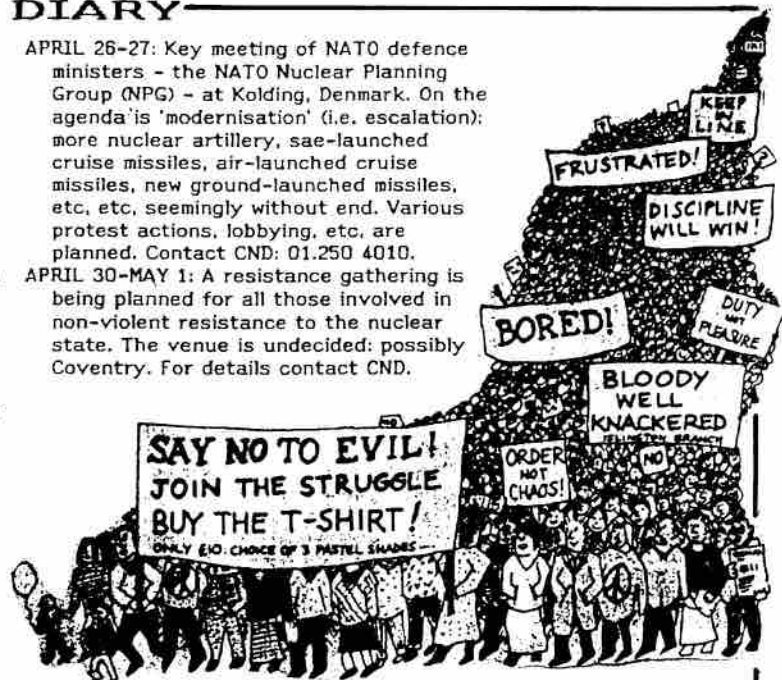
APRIL 30-MAY 1: A resistance gathering is

being planned for all those involved in

non-violent resistance to the nuclear

state. The venue is undecided: possibly

Coventry. For details contact CND.





NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...

• Under the INF Treaty, the warheads and guidance systems of the intermediate-range missiles can, if either country chooses, be removed beforehand. It is likely that Cruise and Pershing warheads will be adapted to go into new missiles. While the missile casings could well be snapped up by the local scrap dealers, the warheads themselves will return in another guise. The INF agreement, as expected, seems to leak like a sieve.

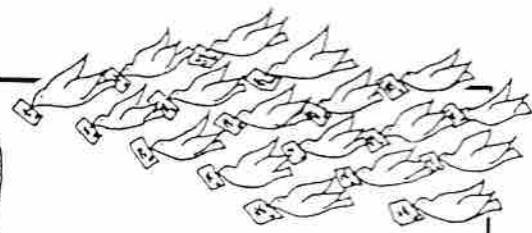
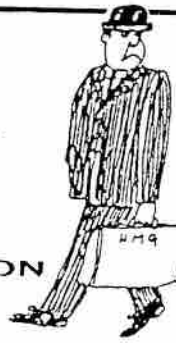


• CRUISE RESISTANCE is calling for demonstrations, vigils, picnics, etc. on the Sunday following the announcement of the ratification of the INF Treaty by the U.S. Senate, at each local U.S. base or port facility. A full list of these, and information generally, can be obtained from Cruise Resistance, c/o CND Office, 13 Paton St, Manchester M1 2BA. The time is right for the peace movement to put the removal of the U.S. bases on to the agenda and to give the U.S. government 'NOTICE TO QUIT'.

• There will be a gathering of women in Manchester on June 18-19 to share experiences and explore ideas about war and violence. The conference has been given the title: Peace, Justice, our Lives, our Direction. The next planning meeting will be on April 16th 10.30 am, 30 Chaucer St, Nottingham. Contact Mary: 061.226 3947.

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BEYOND THE FENCE AT ALDERMASTON



IT WAS good to see peace groups proudly displaying their banners at the NHS march recently - making the links. These 'links' of course are highly selective, confined to the less controversial campaigns; I'd love to see a CND banner unfurled on an Animal Rights march, for example; though obviously it won't happen. Nevertheless it always gives a boost to footsore campaigners to see different groups coming along on these various demonstrations - whether against Clause 29, or against the Alton Bill, or in defence of the NHS. These marches have been lively and angry; in contrast the CND march will be a pleasant ramble, with lots of chat and socialising. When we finally spill round Aldermaston the paper doves will be pinned to the fence, the base will be encircled, the speakers will give the speeches, and then the coaches will suck us away again, before the light begins to fall. In the twinkling of an eye CND will have come and gone: and darkness and silence will fall once more on the perimeters of Aldermaston, and, further up the road, on the evil and infamous bomb factory at Burghfield. Through the fence we shall be watching them, scrutinising all their plotting and planning - every step they take, every move they make, as the song goes. Beyond the fence stand the police: a nuclear state is necessarily a police state: and beyond the police, themselves only hirelings and pawns, the war machine ticks on according to its own laws, and its own momentum. It's important that someone should bear witness to all this. But protest must not stop at the fence. Think what six miles of fence covered in symbols will look like. Front page news! announces CND cheerily in its newsletter, thus disclosing the ultimate ambition - a photo in 'The Guardian'. This appeal to the media thus shapes the campaign, and the boundaries of what is acceptable, blunting its sharp and subversive edge. In this way all things turn to blandness - and ineffectuality. This is the society of the Spectacle, the image and the facade; but sometimes the glass has to be broken, the fence cut. Personally I've become sick of doves and rainbows - perhaps we could have a new 'peace' symbol: the necessary and ever-useful boltcutters!

No doubt there will be a few choice bits of NVDA at Aldermaston, though not perhaps at Burghfield, where psychopathic guards threaten to shoot you on sight. NVDA is given a token nod, but is still downplayed, relegated to the footnotes of the campaign; there is a feeling that NVDA has its place: but it must be kept there. In this respect the local groups reflect the priorities of National CND which keeps the campaign under firm control, and along well-worn grooves, while paying lip-service to the ideals of local autonomy and decentralisation. But there are few rumblings about this, because the peace movement is like a close family - even the scandals are family scandals; the point is to sit tight, close ranks, and wait till the trouble blows over. Thus the 'scandal' of the Molesworth rapes has faded; what happened to all the proposed workshops and conferences on male violence? Did any take place? And what was the outcome? Not a whisper: the ripples that threatened to become waves have been smoothed away.

This reflects a need to present a bland and united front: a respectable middle-class campaign, though with the odd skeleton in the cupboard. It also accounts for the sheer boredom of most peace magazines, which tend to follow the party line, without reflecting the real vitality of grassroots activity. Away from the need to seem 'peaceful' (i.e. polite) there is a good deal of real, ferocious debate - on non-violence, for example (there are many peace campaigners who are not pacifists), on direct action, on tactics and strategy. As Philip Rieff has remarked (in 'The Triumph of the Therapeutic'): 'One is a little frightened to witness so much aggression displayed by people seeking an end to aggression.' None of this surfaces in peace publications: there is a crying need for a lively, irreverent peace mag with lots of humour, and an informative critique of what is really going on. There is still plenty of life in the peace movement: Cruise Resistance is going strong, and there is the Anti-Nuclear Network, a grassroots national movement against nuclear power which supports effective mass direct action. There is also a 'resistance gathering' at the end of April (a sort of 'alternative' conference?) which will no doubt feature lively discussion. Let a thousand flowers bloom!

• Barry Maycock

Henry Ford said that history is bunk - and it is in the interests of magnates of the ilk of Ford that people should be kept in the dark about their own past. However, we are rediscovering the significance of parts of our history - like our contact with the Aborigines of Australia and the contemporary history of our assistance in the destruction of the native peoples of Amazonia (see Edward Goldsmith in GL57). But what of the contact between native peoples within our own history, in England? GAVIN SMITH presents some of his rediscoveries about the Dark Ages in Surrey and provides a stimulus for all of us to take a look at 'history', wherever we come from. After all, green utopias will still need to draw on historical lessons, so we need to have the truth about our past.

Debunking History

History is to be one of the core subjects of Kenneth Baker's new National Curriculum for schools. But what would Green History be like? Is this a matter worth consideration?

First, a provisional definition: 'Green History is a perspective on history that concentrates on the extent of popular control at any period in the past, and on the extent to which control was utilised in an environmentally sensitive way.' Being a socialist, I would say that Green History ought also to be non-elitist, feminist and anti-racist. Assuming we can (re)write our own Green History, we can't expect it immediately to replace good old imperialist and capitalist history in Mr Baker's curriculum, but we can hope it will take over the minds of Alternative and Labour people, amongst whom history has become sadly neglected. The uncomfortable truth is that both left and right-wing people are more ignorant about our culture's past than is any self-respecting native people with the remnants of an oral tradition.

However, we are forcibly rather than wilfully ignorant about our background. To illustrate this, let me take as my example the 'official history' of the accurately-named



Dark Ages: the 2-300 years between the retreat of the Roman legions in 410 AD and the subsequent emergence of the supposedly Anglo-Saxon 'England' (Angle-land). It was in the Dark Ages that were laid the origins of our race, our language, our nation, our religion, our class structure, our geographic settlements, our rural technology and in fact, our culture.

I aim to show that provided with a green, non-elitist, feminist, anti-racist perspective we can remarkably quickly make rediscoveries which seem to have eluded straight historians, and at the very least open up whole new areas to question.

• History today

'Alternative' history is not new. For example, the role of women is being rediscovered in such works as Sheila Rowbotham's Hidden from History(1974). Charles Poulsen's The English Rebels(1984) dispels the myth that there have not been repeated and violent revolutions throughout English history.

Marxism, of course, has a tradition of historical analysis. Yet to the green eye, Marxist historians take too narrow a view. Even a good Marxist history such as Perry Anderson's study of the Dark Ages, Passages from Late Antiquity to Feudalism(1978), contains technocratic and racist assumptions adopted unchallenged from official history. Sometimes this narrowness is simply laughable: Sahlin's Stone Age Economics(1974), left-sympathetic and apparently anti-materialist, discusses the domestic economies of Stone Age cultures without once mentioning children or childcare.

Feminist and economic-Marxist analyses must be blended together, obviously. But to them have to be added essential ingredients from those who concentrate on the non-materialist 'cultural' realm. Petr Kropotkin's anarchist Mutual Aid(1902) revealed a non-Marxist dictum: that at every level of technology there is a choice between an authoritarian and a libertarian organisation of society. In The Village Community(1890), G.L. Gomme showed the durability of social custom in binding social organisations to their past, while feminist Merlin Stone's The Paradise Papers(1979) forces us to recognise the dominating historical influence of paternalistic religious orthodoxy.

• The Dark Ages

The official version of the Dark Ages is that the 'Celts', the populace under the Romans, were either killed or ran away to Wales, and England arose glorious on the backs of the Anglo-Saxons who rowed their boats across from northern Europe. These Anglo-Saxons, so the story goes, were simple independent country folk, and it is to them that we owe our independent democratic spirit, our language, our nation etc, etc. Unfortunately, even

Marxist historians have bought this story.

So what really happened? Or, to put it more pointedly: who are we, where do we come from, and why do we do what we do, and believe what we believe? (This is not to ignore the large numbers of cultures that have come to England since.)

The traditional view of the Dark Ages has come in for some knocks recently. Firstly, it has been realised that the population of Roman Britain was much higher than expected: maybe 4 million, crashing by perhaps two-thirds into the Dark Ages, and was no more than half the Romano-British total well after the Norman conquest. Far from finding a land of forests and Roman ruins, any Teutons arriving from Saxony would have seen a landscape long exploited to the full at that level of technology; modern archeology now knows that the Romano-British were not confined to the chalk downs and Roman highways but had settlements everywhere.

Secondly, the 'Celts' didn't die out. In spite of the population crash (a product apparently of plague, warfare and social and economic disruption) a study of blood groups claims to show that the pre-Anglo-Saxon element in the population is still $\frac{1}{2}$ in central southern England, falling to very little in East Anglia, but rising to $\frac{1}{2}$ when you go west to Dorset. It has been suggested that the assumption of the disappearing 'Celts' is no more than a pro-Germanic arrogance, fashionable before the First World War. It has also been suggested that the 'Celts' weren't Celtic anyway: they were a layering of

successive racial groups of whom only the most recent and politically dominant were Celts from central Europe.

Combe has perhaps the most pertinent analysis: he reckons England comparable to India, whose caste society (in England we call it 'class') is partly the product of successive racial imperialisms reaching back over thousands of years. This may sound a bit extreme - or obvious, depending on your point of view. However, if true, it would clearly have considerable implications for our concept of national history. For instance, from Michael Wood's book *Domesday* (1986), based on his popular TV series, we learn that in 1086 *Domesday* clerks recorded up to 20% of the population of some areas, one of which was east Surrey, as "slaves". Michael does not ask where these slaves came from or whether they relate to today's class system. Where they 'Celts'? And where are they now?

It was in order to examine this darker side of Surrey's social history that I initiated my own unfunded research project. Having been born in east Surrey, I felt that I might have a personal stake in its findings. In the boxes are some of my results, paired with the hitherto accepted version. All are relevant to a perspective of Green History.

In the findings that follow, the official version is presented first, then the alternative version, and finally the meaning of the differences between them for our history.

Christianity was adopted in England because of its obvious rightness.

BELIEF SYSTEMS

Aethelberht, the king of Kent, accepted Christianity from papal emissary Augustine in 597 for purely political reasons: Kent was the vassal of powerful Christian kingdoms in northern France and hoped to gain advantage over pagan rivals in East Anglia and Northumbria. Surrey was converted to Christianity only when prehistoric holy hills, wells and groves were built over with churches.

Thus, ancient environment-centred philosophy was alive and well in the 7th century until subdued by patriarchic, centralised religion imposed by feudal overlords.

STURDY PIONEERS?

Place-names containing Old English personal names (e.g. Fetcham meaning 'Fecca's homestead') record the original Anglo-Saxon colonists of the empty forest. More recently it has been realised that many such names are in fact remainings of existing settlements - they probably record a new landowner.

Personal names tend to occur at places which in medieval times became enclosed parkland. Some also coincide with sites of Roman villas.

Thus, medieval feudalism has its origins at least in the Dark Ages and may be a direct development from Roman estates. The local control of land has been a political issue in England for at least 2000 years (and no doubt much longer).

WRITTEN HISTORY

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is one of the principal written records surviving to us from the Dark Ages.

It records the Anglo-Saxons completely overrunning southern England by the end of the era.

The Chronicle is a romanticisation of history by a dominant feudal class. Compiled in the late 9th century for the Saxon royal house of Wessex, it deliberately misrepresents the history of neighbouring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, let alone that of any surviving and subservient 'Celtic' population.

Thus, official history is always concocted. In the case of the Chronicle, the concoction is 1000 years old.

Prehistoric peoples were confined to easily-worked light soils such as the chalk Downs. The Anglo-Saxons arrived with the 'technological fix' of a heavier plough and were able to colonise the clay lowlands where most of us live today. More recently it has been realised that the lowlands also had prehistoric settlements.

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

Settlement geography has remained relatively stable since the Bronze Age with principle settlements lying along rivers and at the foot of the Downs (where Roman villas and 'Saxon' villages coincide). The chalk downs became depopulated in medieval times as a result of large landowners enclosing land for sheep-walks for the wool trade.

Thus, settlements shifted because of monopolistic controls over land, not 'technological advances in agriculture'.

Each of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (the Heptarchy of Kent, Wessex etc) were united social entities, raising their own popular armies.

The term 'the people of Surrey' is used in the Chronicle very much as if it means 'the army of Surrey'. Surrey's name ('Southern Region') in its old spelling, contains the rare Germanic suffix '-ge' ('region') found elsewhere only in eastern Kent and the Isle of Ely. It conceivably signifies the original military districts granted to the Anglo-Saxon 'feodorat' (mercenaries) known to have been invited in by post-Roman Celtic leaders. Only later were these male mercenaries joined by larger-scale Anglo-Saxon migration from Europe.

DEFENCE

Thus, defence became the prerogative of an alien group, distinct from the mixed-race general populace. The departure of one imperialist group (the Romans) left a vacuum filled by another (an Anglo-Saxon militarist hierarchy).



• 'Theirstory' revealed

Obviously, the findings here have been simplified, as has the crudity of the 'official version'. But remember it is a crude version which is taught in schools and indeed held by many of the right-wing historians who crowd the professorships of universities and who write our textbooks. Professors and academics are anyway hampered by academic overspecialisation - a peculiarly male disease - of which Sahlin's childless Stone Age societies are a graphic product.

The oldest English market towns are of middle Saxon date. Roman towns died when the Romans left. Thus, mixed-race market centres, originating in pre-Saxon settlements, were the basis of subsequent economic development.

In north and east Surrey the majority of medieval towns (Croydon, Leatherhead, Chertsey) have partly Celtic, partly English names.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

ADMINISTRATION

Place-names with the Old English ending '-ingas' (people) mark the earliest incoming Anglo-Saxon tribalist tribes. More recently it has been realised that such names (Woking, Dorking, Reading etc.) are probably 7th century and so later than assumed. Their significance is unknown. Such names in Surrey coincide with half-a-dozen early strategic churches ('minsters') founded on royal estates. This seems confirmed for other counties. The term '-ingas' presumably means 'flock'. Thus, the regional imposition of religious unity was useful to Anglo-Saxon royalty since it allowed significant control over a mixed-race populace. It achieved a switch of allegiance from the local environment to a purious 'higher social good'. Folks '-ingas' has the same illusory democratic feel attached to subsequent forms of centralised administration: monarchy, parliament, law, police.

THE LANGUAGE

English arrived with the Anglo-Saxons and replaced a linguistic vacuum in south-east England in the sixth century. So many of the place-names of north-east Surrey have Celtic elements that it has been reckoned this reveals prolonged and peaceful contact between Celtic and English speakers. Indeed, typical place-names seem to represent a 'pidgin' Celtic-English. Name-types fall into distinct geographical patterns and for the 7th century there are indications that '-ham' settlements were especially developed by the newcomers, that '-stead' marks a Celtic zone and '-don' possibly Celtic settlements within Anglo-Saxon dominated areas. Thus, the Anglo-Saxons experienced full cultural contact with their predecessors and English became the lingua franca of the resultant mixed population probably no earlier than the 7th century.

What my Dark Age findings seem to show is that our official history is (as expected) blatantly racist and elitist, and completely clouds the issues of environment, technology, religion and militarism. It is racist in that it accepts uncritically the Anglo-Saxon version of events and makes the pre-Anglo-Saxons into non-people. It is elitist in that it obscures the details of feudalism and the class system. And it is anti-green in that it fabricates false myths about economics and technology; giving them an 'inevitability' that does not allow us to look at the question of who controls them and in whose interest (e.g. whether a bow and arrow be used for hunting animals or people; whether hunting is limited or pursued till the extinction of the prey species). Most technologies are not inherently good or bad; it is rather the ways they are used and controlled that are. Marxist history unfortunately tends to adopt the same pseudo-scientific notion of 'inevitability' as official history.

Official history is thus the story of misrepresentation. Partly it achieves this through the manufacture of New Ages (the Disappearance of the Celts, the Movement to the Lowlands, the Conversion to Christianity) which displace what is in reality a continuous environmental experience: as my evidence shows, the Celts didn't conveniently disappear at the end of their allotted 'Age'. By partitioning history, the similarities between different 'Ages' are disguised (e.g. the similarity of the feudal control of people and environment exercised from Roman villas before the Dark Ages and from medieval manors after the Dark Ages). The essentially political nature of environmental control is suppressed or represented as a neatly packaged inevitability.

• History tomorrow

One of history's greatest failings is its divorce from current life. Our history is remade daily by the media, with its macho and racist romanticisations of everything from King Arthur to 'Nam. It is imperative that we reclaim our past and put a green perspective into it. As it is, the influence of TV drama (despite the occasionally very good pieces) and the final death of local oral tradition are making our children even more ignorant about their past than we already are. Even supposedly populist developments can be anything but green: the craze for family trees is individualist ancestor worship rather than social critique, and industrial archeology has quite happily accepted the elitist organisation of society.

Without Green History we will be unable to formulate sensible green utopias, because utopias feed off historical analysis. William Morris's News From Nowhere (1891) unashamedly looks to the past for guidance; Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time (1979) is technocratic (e.g. test-tube babies) whilst omitting to discuss the historical experience of the social control of technology. The readers of both these inspiring books, and of the utopias that we ourselves write and try to enact, would benefit from a popular green historical consciousness. So far, official history has disguised the specific ways that power has been taken from local communities, from subject peoples, from lower classes and from women.

We do not need to romanticise some 'glorious past' since each period of history (e.g. the growth of Roman and medieval towns or the disruption to the status quo of the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Danish invasions) has thrown up an opportunity to destroy old corrupt elitisms and replace them by more just and environmentally-sound organisations of society. We need to re-establish a realistic view of the evolution of social forces which has given us (and still controls) the present. This endeavour could draw together green economists, anthropologists, geographers - specialisms which require a coherent joint framework.

History is not always bunk.

In GL58 letters, Dave McCrick asked someone to write about the history of marijuana, which he thought might explain current (official) attitudes. Now he has DEREK STOKES to thank for smoking out some historical truths about the dreaded weed.

The great American Cannabis con

If you accept the premise that marijuana is the harmless herb that every government-sponsored report so far has proved it to be, you must ask yourself why for the last 50 years there has been so much fuss made about it. For this you have to look at the rest of the plant and its uses. You find that the marijuana plant (*Canabis Sativa*) is also known as the hemp plant, from which fibres can be obtained for cloth and paper manufacture. The cloth produced is similar to fine linen and had been in use for well over 1000 years before cotton was discovered.

Through the US Freedom of Information Act it was discovered that the 'reefer-madness' hysteria of the 1930s was nothing but a hoax perpetrated on the American people (and the rest of us) in order to take hemp out of competition with the cotton industry. At the same time, the repeal of the Volstead Act in America making alcohol legal again meant that squads of government revenue agents would have to find proper jobs unless a new menace could be found.

• Monopoly capitalism at work

Marijuana, up until that time used mainly by poor Mexican immigrants and blacks, was the perfect choice. The earlier laws regarding opium and cocaine were nothing but racist tracts designed to control the Chinese and Negro segments of America, so a new law to harrass Mexicans was welcome too. Previously, marijuana had been seen as pretty harmless, but the might of the American media was harnessed to inform the public of this great 'new' menace that had suddenly appeared in their midst overnight. Only one doctor was present on the investigating committee and he was against the ban. However, the overwhelming 'evidence' that the media (owned by the same people that grew the cotton) put forward was convincing.

The hemp plant grows to a final height of 15-20 feet in relatively poor soil, sending a tap root down almost as far as the plant's own height. It needs only 2-3 inches of rain but can survive on as little as 1". When harvested, the root structure is left to hold the soil together. The oil that produces intoxication is secreted from the leaves and seed-heads to protect them from extremes of heat and frost.

By contrast, cotton needs well-drained flat land with good soil (often sprayed with chemicals) and takes up to 7 months to mature. It also needs up to 180 days of sunshine without frost, which limits production to certain parts of the world - one of the best (surprise, surprise!) being the southern United States. Landowners there have grown it for generations, importing slave labour from Africa for the picking.

By the 1950s over 70% of the world's fibre was being produced from American cotton and almost none from hemp. In fact a permit is needed from the Drug Enforcement Administration Department of Justice to grow marijuana in the US (or from the Home Secretary in Britain). The virtual monopoly of the cotton growers, created by manipulation of the law, ensured great profits for a time. However, the 'dope-fiend' image of the marijuana smoker had to be maintained, so profits were channelled into the newspaper, film and TV industries who produce whichever image is being paid for.

Some hemp fibre is used in paper production; for instance in dollar bills, which are much stronger than our own banknotes. It is also used for the thin tough paper that a great deal of bibles are printed on. The seeds are also useful, not just as food for canaries, but also, having a 30% oil content, as a light machine oil.

Adopted as a Green Party policy, the re-legalisation of hemp production would mean that the vast acreages of pine forest currently producing wood for paper pulp could be used for hardwood production instead. A

pine tree needs 20 years of growth before harvesting but hemp only needs one short growing season of a few months. This would allow time to rest the earth or grow another crop in rotation. Most librarians are aware of the fragility of the books printed on wood-pulp over the last 50 years and would like to see the use of more durable materials. It comes as no surprise to note that large tracts of land devoted to pulp production are owned by the publishing industry.

As noted above, hemp can grow in the poorest of soils and does very



nicely in 'Third World' countries like Columbia, Mexico, Jamaica, Pakistan, Lebanon, Afghanistan and parts of Africa where it could be used as a cash crop to finance these countries' independence from oppressive capitalist intervention. Perhaps this is one reason why this innocent herb is persecuted to this very day.

The only harmful effect I've ever noticed has been due to the disgusting habit we seem to have in this country of mixing it with tobacco, a truly addictive drug which several of my friends have become hooked on as a result of this vile practice.

DEREK adds that more info is available in The Ecologist of Oct/Nov 1980 which devoted an entire issue to the subject



DIRECT ACTION UNDER ATTACK!

encouraged activists all over the world to form their own ALF groups, has alarmed the state and the animal abuse industries, but has also brought into question the methods of the national societies, and their effectiveness. Also, the media have been enlisted by the state in its attempt to destroy the ALF, and people have tended to take at face value the lies and fantasies that have been spread, particularly by the press - often because there is no other source of information available.

The task of Robin Lane as national press officer (in succession to Ronnie Lee) was not only to put the case for the ALF, but also to bring up the issues behind the actions. But in this he was continually frustrated, and circumstances finally conspired to make his role redundant, and his position impossible. With mail intercepted and his phone tapped, very little information was actually getting through: it was often the case that he would only find out about an action when the press rang him up. Even then everything he said would be distorted, he would be misquoted, remarks would be taken out of context, and if necessary the press would simply tell lies and invent everything anyway. No-one was ever interested in the issues: their only concern was with 'violence'.

Incidentally this meeting took place a few days after the Gibraltar killings: with sublime hypocrisy, governments - the most violent and heavily armed organisations on earth - always applaud non-violence in their opponents.

Soon Robin will be on trial for 'incitement', along with Sally Carr and Terry Collins. It is clear that the state wants this to be a 'show trial',

identifying the ALF SG with the ALF itself. There will be lots of publicity: how we smashed the ALF! Cardiff (rather than London) appears to have been chosen for the trial in order to cause the maximum inconvenience to the defence and its supporters; all the more reason for us to make the effort to attend. The trial will start on May 3rd at Cardiff Crown Court: Green Line will be there to report on the outcome, and to offer support.

At the beginning of the meeting we were shown a harrowing film of a laboratory in which primates were being used in AIDS research. We saw those poor creatures that had been driven mad, and those that were dying in great agony. We saw the beseeching, uncomprehending eyes; we saw hands reaching out through the cell bars to make contact, to touch, to beg for help. The film put the whole discussion in its proper context; it inspired us to fight even harder against such an evil. As The Smiths sing (in 'Meat Is Murder'):-Do you know how animals die?

SAVED BY THE ARC

Arc Print, the Animal Rights printers and publishers, have produced a new book, Kill or Cure: the role of the pharmaceutical industry in society by James Crawford. The author wrote 'Kill or Cure' as a small part of a larger manuscript which exposed vivisection from every angle; he was turned down by commercial publishers, the BUAV and NAVS, and finally came to ARC Print who could not afford to publish the whole book and so published just one section. It will be reviewed in next month's Green Line. For details contact Arc Print, 265 Seven Sisters Rd, Finsbury Park, London N4.

THE ALF has suffered a curious fate: it is condemned everywhere for its 'violence', yet in the 11 years since it was formed, out of an earlier group called 'The Band of Mercy', not one person has been hurt as a result of an ALF action. The ALF is denounced not only by its obvious opponents - that unholy trinity of the state, industry, and the media - but also by much of the animal rights movement, particularly by the national societies. Yet ALF policy is one of strict non-violence, insisting that no harm should come to human beings or animals in the course of its campaign. So why this strange collusion with respect to the ALF - between two sides that are, at other times, the bitterest of opponents? Even when the national societies publicise direct action they will not acknowledge any part played by the ALF - even though they tend to support the Central Animal Liberation League, which carries out similar ALF-style raids on vivisection laboratories. In this way they do their bit by keeping the ALF invisible and isolated, while the state continues to marginalise it as a 'terrorist' organisation.

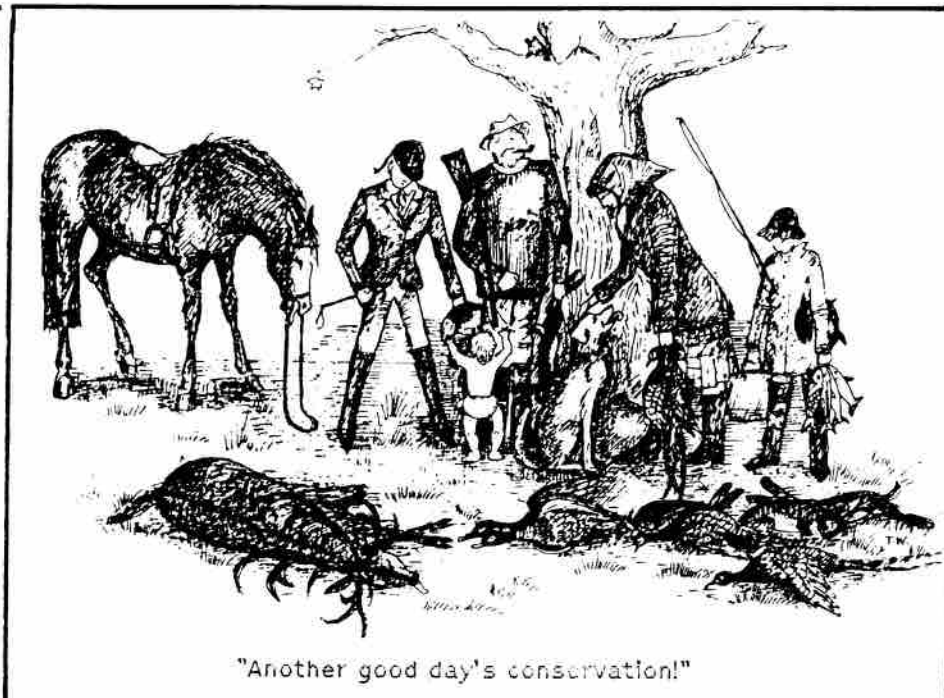
At a meeting in London on March 10th Robin Lane (alias Chris Oakley), former national press officer of the ALF Supporters Group, explained how this had happened. The sheer success of the ALF, which has inspired so many actions and

APRIL 9: Coordinating Animal Welfare meeting at Earlsmead Community Centre, Broad Lane, London N15, 1pm - 5.30pm. This will be the third in its series of open meetings. The first two events, one in Birmingham and the other in Bristol, were both successful in promoting the idea of CAW, but now it must progress from a set of good ideas into an effective force to push forward the cause of animal rights.

APRIL 11: Islington Animal Rights public meeting: 'Hidden Crimes' - the film that exposes not only the cruelty to animals of vivisection but also the damage it has done to human health. A speaker will discuss the implications of this disturbing and controversial issue.

APRIL 16: Islington Animal Rights picket of London Zoo to protest against the imprisonment of animals and the connection with vivisection. Meet 12 noon at Camden Town Hall.

APRIL 23: NAVS march at Brighton on the World Day for Laboratory Animals. Meet at Preston Park Avenue 2.00 pm, and then march to the seafront where later there will be a dawn vigil from 9 pm onwards. This will be a silent march - and everyone is supposed to wear black. Details from NAVS, 01.580 4034.



"Another good day's conservation!"

HOW?

The story so far...

Edgar is having a problem with his household vermin. Pesticide has only created mutant cockroaches

Read on...

IM TIRED OF BEING PUSHED AROUND BY INFERIOR LIFE FORMS! IT'S TIME TO GET TOUGH!



STAND BACK, MADGE!! THESE MUTATE COCKROACHES HAVE NO RESPECT FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY!



Thanks to Semiotext[e] Strip by Matt Feazell

THE NEXT DAY, EDGAR CHANGES TACTICS.

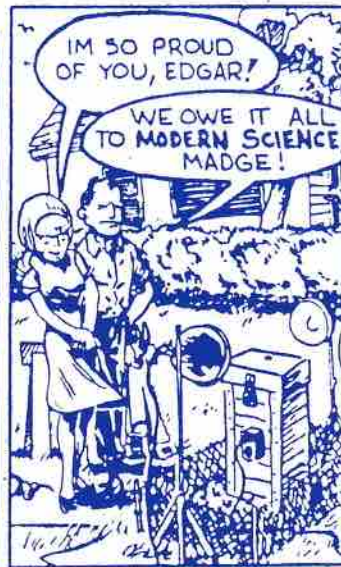
IVE DECIDED TO LET ALL YOU ANTS LIVE TOGETHER IN THIS LUXURY HIVE.



PEST CONTROL



WITH THE INSTITUTION OF A SYSTEM OF WORK CREDITS AND INCENTIVES, EDGAR GETS THE ANTS TO DO MOST OF HIS YARD WORK.



UNDER SIMILAR PRESSURE, THE COCKROACHES RESPOND WITH A LIST OF THEIR OWN DEMANDS.



Next month... How will Edgar deal with Insect revolution? Can he divide and rule? Can you possibly wait till then to find out?