

proposition. To suggest that *all* qualified architects are wreckers and that there is virtually no good modern architecture is absurd. Such blanket criticism of any group of people cannot be true. If the art critic of your paper were so narrow as to write that there had been no good art since the impressionists and that only amateur artists were of consequence, your readers would be inclined to go elsewhere for good art criticism, which is what they will have to do to find a broad and measured view of architecture.

## Deputy headmaster

John Bradbrook, London N1

It was surprising to read in your editorial (NS 19 August) that you would prefer Roy Hattersley to Michael Meacher as the next deputy leader of the Labour Party.

Neil Kinnock represents the centre ground of the present day Labour Party, which is one reason why he has such widespread support in all sections of the movement. Roy Hattersley represents the old Right, the Gaitskellite tradition, despite his radical protestations. Michael Meacher represents Labour's new left, the inside loyalist left of, say, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, and not the rather doubtful 'converts' from the 57 varieties of Trotskyism.

If Hattersley were to get the deputy position, this would mean *either* a leader and deputy leader always publicly at odds because of the wide political gap between Kinnock and Hattersley (which would not be exactly good for the image of the party) *or* Hattersley would encourage Kinnock to side always with the 'sensible moderates' against the left. The Kinnock-Hattersley leadership would become an open target for the left. Hattersley would be repeatedly challenged every year for the deputy leadership in a series of action replays of 1981. Neil Kinnock would then be in an impossible position, as he would lose friends whatever he did, especially if he tried to sit on the fence.

It would be much better from every point of view if Michael Meacher were elected deputy. He would make a loyal, honest, competent and conscientious deputy leader. He is, after all, the epitome of decency, sincerity and common sense, rather like the archetypal liberal headmaster of an inner city comprehensive school.

What is more, a Kinnock-Meacher leadership would be a recognition of the shift to the left which has taken place and is still taking place in the mainstream of the party. The Labour Right, which is historically a declining force anyway, would either have to adapt to the new majority, or, if they really want to defect, they should do so. It would certainly clarify the political situation. It would be absurd to allow such blackmail to influence Labour's choice of deputy leader.

All in all, if you value Neil Kinnock's job security as the next leader of the Labour Party then vote for Michael Meacher as deputy leader.

## Employers' breach of contract

Mark Benney, London EC4

The explanation for the helplessness of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association in the face of dishonoured national agreements (NS 19 August) in fact lies in s18 of the 1974 Trade Union Labour Relations Act. This was the legislation enacted by the new Labour government to replace the disastrous 1971 Act. Whereas the latter said that collective agreements would be presumed to have been intended as legally

binding, this was reversed by TULRA.

It is true that the courts will not grant specific performance of employment contracts, but only in as much as to do so would be to enjoin the continuance of a contract for personal services. Specific terms and conditions can still be the subject of an action for breach of contract, provided they have been 'incorporated' into the workers' individual contracts.

It is therefore open to individual aggrieved members of the unions to sue the employers for breach of contract, with financial support from their organisations. In each case, one individual could bring what is known as a 'representative action' for damages and, more importantly, a declaration that the employers have acted in breach of contract. The effect would be to establish the legal right of all the affected employees.

This is not to deny that the inevitable and most effective response to such arbitrary action will usually be industrial action. But, in the present climate, the existence of sound legal remedies should never be overlooked.

## For the record

Wolfgang Rüdig, Dept of Liberal Studies in Science, Manchester University

I was dismayed by some of the editorial changes which you made to my article on the Ecology Party (NS 5 August). As someone who is not a native speaker of English, I appreciate that some rewording may have been necessary, and perhaps also some shortening. Unfortunately, this process has led to one serious distortion of my original writing in the passage dealing with Edward Goldsmith's influence on the Ecology Party before 1975. While in my original article I only report charges of 'eco-fascism' being made in the early 1970s, the passage published by the *New Statesman* creates the false impression that I personally endorse these charges. This distortion is particularly serious in conjunction with the illustration of the article by Edward Goldsmith's picture being presented as 'an image of eco-fascism'. This is personally offensive and factually wrong. I would like to make it totally clear that I am not responsible for the parts of the published article which contain charges of 'eco-fascism', and that I strongly disagree with such an interpretation of Edward Goldsmith's work.

## Labour votes and the Alliance

William Wallace, London SW17

Bernard Crick's analysis of the Labour Party's defeat (NS 12 August) comes close to assuming that the Labour Party lost votes directly to the Alliance — and that it is from the Alliance that it must therefore regain them.

My own experience as a Liberal candidate in the June 1983 election campaign (which is confirmed by a number of more expert analysts), is that a much more complicated process of electoral adjustment is under way. The Alliance won a considerable number of votes from the Conservatives among the 'concerned middle classes'. On the council estates, a great many votes went straight from Labour to the Conservatives — votes which we had hoped to gain, but which were strongly attracted by the nationalist and materialist appeal of the Conservative government.

I doubt if the 'hard-hat' vote which Labour is now losing is likely to be regained either by the Alliance or by the Labour Party. One of the Labour Party's problems over the last 20 years has been that, in reality, the trade unions which

represent the better paid working classes have been conservative, wishing to defend their status and pay scales against those below them and to preserve what privileges they felt they had. In the United States, they have become a significant part of the core Republican vote.

If we want to reconstruct a progressive coalition in British politics, it has got to be reconstructed on a new basis. The idea that Labour can 'regain' the working-class vote ignores demographic, social and economic change.

## Look, no hands

Steve Potter, Acting National Secretary, Socialist League

John Salmon's piece on the Cowley victimisations was completely marred by its juxtaposition to John Rentoul's ill-informed witch-hunting piece on CND and the Socialist League. (NS 19 August). We are for building the strongest possible CND movement open to all political currents. We are categorically opposed to any current, including our own, organisationally manipulating the movement.

Rentoul makes a series of incredible charges. We deny any manipulation in CND, including at the Labour Movement Conference Against the Missiles in 1981. He says the Socialist League produced a delegates' briefing on the issues we wanted to take up at the conference. Certainly we did — as do dozens of other political viewpoints at that and other conferences. Is it now a violation of democracy to try to get people to agree with you or give those supporting your positions material to make sure they have as many arguments, information and facts as possible to use in their speeches?

The charge of Rentoul's article that the growth of Labour CND and Youth CND was a sure sign of its 'manipulation' is a catch 22 argument. Usually witch-hunters charge that Marxists are 'taking over empty shell labour bodies'. Now it seems that they are showing manipulation by persuading people to join them in larger numbers! *Of course* we try to get people to join YCND, or Labour CND, or national CND. Youth CND in Oxford grew massively because it organised a 200-strong march to Greenham Common and signed up 300 people to go to the National Rock the Bomb festival. A lot of people joined Oxford YCND as a result. Is this a further example of 'manipulation'?

If Rentoul or the *New Statesman* has some real evidence of inventing non-existent members, or rigging of votes, please come forward with it. As such methods are typically used against the left wing by the right we have as much interest in exposing them as anyone. Rentoul simply wants to mix up arguing for our political positions — which we certainly do — with organisational swindles — which we categorically deny.

There is a major debate about orientation going on in CND. We think the *New Statesman* would do better to argue its positions politically than repeat the type of material that habitually appears in the *Sun*.

## Stockings and slips

C. P. Macnaughton, Edinburgh

Please draw to the attention of Sue Townsend (Diary 5 August) the fact that nylon stockings were not known in this country in 1940 (when M. H. Roberts was 14¼). Lady Olga Wasteland had no need, therefore, to lament their disappearance from the shops.

'Nylons' did not come to this country until a few years later, initially brought in by US servicemen.

ing in stating that Mr Cleland had not made a complaint. I have no reason to believe that this was the result of anything other than a simple misunderstanding.' Cleland had, in fact, seen a doctor and made a complaint, as his prison records show.

As Cleland's case drags on, now in its eleventh year, more and more people have something to lose if his initial allegations — and all the ones that hang on them — are proved right. McCafferty has been a police expert witness in very many trials. A number of those involved in investigating the murder are now in positions of responsibility.

The competence of whole systems of police investigation, prison care, medical supervision and Home Office inquiry, are also thrown into doubt. Since Cleland was convicted, he has been the responsibility of

the Home Office which itself decides whether or not he has been the victim of any miscarriage of justice. In 1968, the campaigning organisation Justice recommended the creation of an official, independent system for properly investigating cases in which genuine doubts had been raised. Four years later, Lord Devlin's committee recommended that the Home Office should study 'the feasibility of setting up an independent review tribunal'. Shirley Williams points out that in the USA, with its Freedom of Information Act, it would have been impossible to conceal the report by Boothby, which she was not allowed to read even as a privy councillor.

In a written summary of his case last year Cleland asked: 'Am I expendable for what I know, because if I am so are we all and 1984 is here and you will have let it happen.' □

## ECOLOGY PARTY

# In the wings

### In the light of the German Greens' success, Wolfgang Rüdiger examines the prospects for Britain's Ecology Party

THE SUCCESS OF the German Greens has given a major impetus to renewed British interest in the 'green' movement. But is that impetus forceful enough to do more than tickle British politics?

Britain was, in fact, the first European country to have an ecological party, but since its foundation in 1973, the Ecology Party has remained on the fringes of British politics. Nobody in this year's election campaign seems to have taken it seriously. Despite expanded media coverage, presentation mainly concentrated on such 'freak' issues as organic farming, or the legalisation of cannabis. Petra Kelly helping to launch the party's campaign was news. The contents of the party's programme were not. Fielding more than 100 candidates in the general election, the Ecology Party polled an average of 1.0 per cent of the votes.

Although better than many fringe groups, this was worse than 1979 and hardly very encouraging.

The discrimination against small parties by the British electoral system is the usual reason given for the weakness of British ecologists. A closer look at the Ecology Party's history reveals many other important influences.

The cradle of the Ecology Party is Coventry. Here, a group of business people, witnessing the decline of British industry, became attracted to the doomsday predictions of popular ecologists in the early 1970s. An article by Paul Ehrlich in *Playboy* set the ball rolling, leading to the foundation, in January 1973, of a party named 'People'. The new party (which changed its name to 'Ecology Party' in 1975) tried to attract the existing environmental groups, such as the

Conservation Society and Friends of the Earth, to party political activity. In this, it largely failed. The Environment movement remained intensely hostile to such an idea, preferring to fight single issues as pressure groups. For this, groups had not only to command expert opinion, but also to remain 'moderate', 'responsible' and 'respectable'.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were certainly important changes, with conflicts being fought more openly in public and the media and the public inquiry becoming of greater importance. But the basically 'unpolitical' nature of the movement remained, making life very difficult for the protagonists of an ecological political party.

In the first years of its existence, the party remained fairly small, not reaching 200 members until 1976. At both 1974 general elections, 'People' fielded candidates: in February, its five candidates scored an average of 1.8 per cent; in October, the average score of its three candidates fell to 0.7 per cent. By 1975, the party experienced its worst crisis, with important leading members leaving or withdrawing from political activity. Only in 1977, with a new leadership taking charge, were the fortunes of the party reversed. This early failure, which almost ended the party's existence, must be seen against the background of a general decline of public concern over such traditional ecologist issues as the population explosion, or the limits to growth. Its major shortcoming was, however, the failure to acquire a constituency, a social base on which it could rely.

Looking at other 'green' parties in conti-

ental Europe, one can observe a consistent split between 'right' and 'left', or 'green greens' and 'red greens'. In electoral terms, the ecological right has not done well. Where it has stood as a party in its own right (as in Germany with the Ecological-Democratic Party of Herbert Gruhl) it has made no impact whatsoever. Far more successful have been parties combining ecological questions with issues promoted by the New Left, the students' movement and its offspring.

THE BRITISH ECOLOGY Party, in its early days, missed out almost totally on the Left. Its founder members had been solicitors and estate agents with a conservative background. One major theoretical inspiration had been Edward Goldsmith, editor of the *Ecologist* and main author of the celebrated *Blueprint for Survival*, who held the view that the reaching of the limits of resources would be preceded by a total social and political breakdown, with the ensuing chaos leading to dictatorial forms of government. The only alternative was seen to be the establishment of 'strong' government now, to prevent, if necessary with authoritarian measures, an escalation of environmental crisis. Goldsmith's social ideal was a hunter-gatherer society, and he basically desired the build-up of a non-industrial society on these principles. The emancipation of women and racial integration were not, for him, compatible with such an ecological society, and were explicitly rejected. Since he was the most prominent early recruit of the new party, an image of reactionary 'eco-fascism' arose.

Goldsmith's views did not, however, remain uncontested inside the party. At the first national conferences, in 1974 and 1975, a number of students and younger people from Leeds and Liverpool formed a kind of 'left' opposition to the party leadership. It objected to a total rejection of industrial society. It supported the feminist movement and the integration of foreign immigrants, and could not accept the idea of an ecological authoritarianism. But although the Left had a number of programmatic successes and a dominant influence in the writing of the 1975 party programme (which is still the basis of Ecology Party policy) it remained isolated both inside the party and in the British Left in general. By 1975, the socialist wing of the party had largely disappeared. Where socialists became interested in environmental politics, they mainly joined the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA), set up in 1973, which concentrates on changing Labour Party and trade union policies.

When, by 1977, a new generation of leading Ecology Party members had initiated a recovery of the party, the old left/right cleavage had outlived itself. The new leaders were pragmatic. Their initiative first of all led to the build-up of a national party with a workable infrastructure. A rise of membership to about 500 in 1978 set the pace for the fielding of 52 candidates in the 1979 general election. This qualified the party for an election TV-spot, which, for the first time, made the greater British public



Edward Goldsmith: an image of 'eco-fascism'

aware of its existence. The 52 candidates polled an average 1.6 per cent, but, more importantly, membership rocketed in to the thousands as a result of the election campaign. The peak of 5,500 members was reached in early 1981. The following year brought a sharp fall in subscriptions, cutting membership by about half, but now it is on the rise again, approaching the 4,000 mark.

THE NEW INTAKE brought with it a broadening of the party's base and new ideological inputs. It also brought new conflicts. On one hand, there were the pragmatic 'electoralists' who sought to rely on traditional party politics and the electoral process to gain a foothold of parliamentary power to initiate a major environmental reform programme aiming at achieving a decentralised, steady-state economy. These had been mainly responsible for the party's revival in the late 1970s and continued to play a very important role. On the other hand, there was the so-called 'anarchist' faction (mostly of young radicals and alternative-lifestyle enthusiasts) who rejected traditional party politics, desired the almost total decentralisation of the party organisation and the greater involvement of the party in extra-parliamentary movements, such as the anti-nuclear and peace movements.

In the last two years, both positions have compromised. The radical wing has successfully withstood moves to centralise party structures further (a rotation system of leadership is maintained); it has also succeeded in opening up the party to greater participation in social movements, peace campaign activities and civil disobedience; but at the same it concentrates its own activities on the local level, leaving the national representation largely to the electoralists.

Despite these considerable moves, there are few signs of major, public success. For one thing, the nuclear energy issue, despite the Sizewell Inquiry, did not escalate into a major movement. The delays in the nuclear construction programme that had been announced in 1979 and the general 'low key' approach taken by the government, particularly the withdrawal of the test programme for nuclear waste disposal and of controversial new nuclear sites such as Luxulyan in

Cornwall, largely removed the potential for a large protest campaign. In addition, the peace issue more and more pushed nuclear energy into the background of public attention. The Ecology Party could thus not build on a radicalised environmental mass protest movement, as have the German Greens.

Secondly, the Left (in its broadest sense) has not significantly changed its attitude to environmental issues. Labour still appears to be in favour of a British nuclear reactor programme and embraces major industrial expansion as its solution to current economic ills. In addition to the peace issue, the traditional social problems of unemployment, social security and housing dominate the activities of the wider Left. Environmental issues play a marginal role, being regarded either as middle-class causes to protect special privileges or as a problem which can be solved by traditional socialist planning.

Thirdly, the Ecology Party has not yet managed to acquire significant support from other social movements. Most members of the peace movement appear to look upon the Labour Party as their parliamentary representative and no major political input can be expected before an incoming Labour government disappoints (as it might) larger sections of the peace movement.

Outside the nuclear weapons issue, the Ecology Party appears totally unable to capitalise on social conflicts. It has been unable, for example, to represent the concerns of either frustrated urban youth or ethnic minorities. It has also failed to integrate the various sectors of the New Left.

Finally, the chances of the Ecology Party attracting the middle-of-the-road voter and the protest vote have been spoiled by the SDP/Liberal Alliance. The Alliance has also absorbed much of the media attention for which the Ecology Party had hoped.

This pessimistic assessment of the party's prospects should not lead to the conclusion that the Ecology Party can be ignored. It is still the only British political party with a genuine ecological and radical disarmament programme. Should the established parties continue to fail in government, with pressing social problems getting out of hand and the environmental crisis becoming more apparent, it has every chance to start breaking the mould of British politics in the future. That potential breakthrough, however, seems a long way off, and would require major changes in the political constellations inhibiting Ecology Party success. For the time being, the party must be content to retain a core of dedicated supporters and just keep going.

The 1983 general election has been important in this respect. The Ecology Party could hardly have looked for imminent political breakthrough. What it got was a message from the British electorate that its existence is appreciated and that it should remain on stand-by for whatever the future might hold in store.

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## Mummy knows best

When it comes to making the best use of oil, the ancients were pretty adept. The oldest known Egyptian mummies were encased in cloth

as a cement for their mosaics, and Nebuchadnezzar constructed a road of burnt bricks laid on asphalt.

The Bible too has many references to crude petroleum. The 'pitch' covering Noah's Ark was undoubtedly bitumen and it's probable that the 'slime' used in the Tower of Babel was asphalt. Pliny mentions that Sellaian oil was burnt in the lamps of the temple of Jupiter. 'Burning Water' was in use in Japan in AD 615, and more than a thousand years ago Yemangyang in Burma was a developed oil field. And today?

Well, we're still striving to make the best possible use of our most valuable resources. Take Mobil's new 200M cranking complex for instance. Just installed at Coryton refinery, it is designed to produce substantially more petrol from every barrel of crude oil. In these days of fuel economy that's just the sort of advantage Britain could do with. Perhaps it wasn't just the Egyptians who had things all wrapped up.

## Mobil

