
the Ecology Party
NEWSLETTER

Oct - Nov
1976

CALL TO ARMS AT WALSALL

As this Newsletter goes to press, the writ for the upcoming Parliamentary by-election at Walsall North has yet to be issued. It is anticipated that the election date will be either November 4th or November 11th. We have a good candidate in Jonathan Tyler, who is British Rail lecturer in rail transport at Birmingham University - but the time is short and he needs as much support as every member of the Party can give him.

Individuals and groups throughout the country are therefore asked to consider how they can help in the Walsall campaign. Physical help in the form of bodies for canvassing will be much appreciated. We also need help in the monumental task of addressing 31,000 election addresses, so that they can be mailed via Freepost. Five hundred addresses appears to be the maximum that one person can handle comfortably, so we need about sixty people to work at this during the next couple of weeks. Some have already volunteered.

Please read carefully the sheet at the back of this Newsletter, fill in the details of any help you can give at Walsall - addressing, canvassing, etc. - and return it IMMEDIATELY to John Davenport, who is acting as Jonathan Tyler's election agent. (Address on back sheet.)

We need money, too, so any donations for the Walsall campaign will be much appreciated.

Because of the publicity attending the Stonehouse affair, the national press will be focussing a lot of attention on this by-election. They will also be trying to interpret the outcome in terms of a possible General Election in the near future. If we can really get a good campaign under way in Walsall, we stand a chance of beginning to put the Ecology Party firmly on the political map.

So - don't just sit there and sympathise: LEND A HAND!

Also in this issue of the Newsletter:

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Introducing the new-style Newsletter

Much discussion has centred on the Newsletter, both at Conference and in the NEC. In accordance with the relevant decision of Conference, Colin Fry and Keith Rushworth - as Information Officer and Deputy Information Officer respectively - have taken over joint responsibility for the publication, which will be issued rather differently from now on.

All members will in future receive a duplicated Newsletter once every two months. This will be an expanded publication, designed to give members all over the country a chance to participate more actively in policy discussion and formation. If you feel strongly about anything to do with the Ecology Party, write to the Newsletter about it. We want to publish your letters in every issue. (But please keep them short.)

We would also like to receive policy papers for circulation via the Newsletter, though the editors reserve the right to print extracts or condensations of these for space reasons.

And we intend to give the membership news of activities by other ecologically-minded political groups throughout the world, so that the lonely road of the individual organic politician in his locality may be brightened by the knowledge that he is part of a movement which really does extend throughout the globe.

The Ecological International is real, although it has no highly organised formal structure as yet.

Incidentally, copies of the Newsletter will also be circulated to our counterparts overseas, to keep them in touch with our activities.

Each issue of the Newsletter will also be used secondarily as a press release.

Members will, however, continue to receive copies of The Good Earth, at least for the time being, in the regular Newsletter mailing. The Ecology Party page is to be continued in that newspaper, although the Newsletter will no longer be published in it.

Communications in connection with the Newsletter should be sent to Colin Fry, c/o Greenways, 200 Wells Rd, Malvern Wells, Worcs; or Keith Rushworth, 8 The Mount, Leeds LS17 7QU.

COLOGY PARTY

REPORT on the 3rd annual Conference, 25th & 26th September 1976

Attendance was down slightly on last year - where were you all?

Tony Whittaker was invited to take the Chair again. He opened the Conference with a number of announcements, the main one being that Jonathan Tyler would be standing in the Walsall North by-election.

The National Executive was extended to 9, and the new NEC includes Clive Lord, Colin Fry, Jonathan Tyler, John Davenport, Edward Goldsmith, John Luck, Elizabeth Davenport, Keith Rushworth and Eric Jones.

Guest speaker Dr. Len Taitz (Chairman, Transport 2000), introduced a lively discussion in which he posed the problem that a no-growth party would have to reconcile the 'left v right' conflict. Tony Whittaker said he had been encouraged by the extent to which party members had been willing to bury this particular hatchet, and Clive Lord felt it was possible to go much further than a truce in bringing the two sides together.

Dr. Taitz went on to say that in his view it was important to convert civil servants to ecological thinking, because they often left the elected decision makers in ignorance of what was being done in their name. Dr. Taitz personally believed that economic growth was bad, but that our arguments would have to rest largely on the fact that it was impossible.

The rest of Saturday and most of Sunday was taken up with the 67 proposed amendments to the Manifesto. This was however a 'rushing-up' operation, and there are no significant policy changes.

Conference then considered various suggestions for introducing a more popular version of the Manifesto. Peter Sizer formally proposed the preparation of a campaign document to be referred to the NEC, and this was agreed. A majority were in favour of a short document which could be distributed free, in preference to an attempt to produce a publication similar to the New Zealand Values Party manifesto "Beyond tomorrow", which would have been retailed through booksellers.

In the absence of Peter Murray, who could only attend on Saturday, there were a number of questions on the financial statement which could not be fully clarified, and this was referred back. At £710, the bank balance was healthier than for some time, although there are a number of anticipated calls upon it.

Peter Sizer was appointed Hon. Auditor.

Conference passed the following resolutions:

1. The EP supports John Tyme in his courageous campaign to bring wider issues into the debate on road expansion schemes. The EP challenges both the assumption and the encouragement of traffic increase, and hopes that in opposing economic growth it will not in future be necessary to resort to unreasonable methods to obtain a hearing for a reasonable case.
2. The EP urges the immediate abolition of VAT on all repair work, and suggests that whatever revenue is lost should be made good by an increase in the VAT rates on newly-manufactured goods.
3. The EP deplors the support for fast breeder nuclear reactors given by the TUC at its 1976 conference, and hopes that the labour movement will recognize the folly of trying to protect employment or living standards by such dangerous methods.
4. The EP endorses Half-Life's campaign to invoke the mechanism of a Planning Enquiry Commission in the case of the proposed extension to the nuclear waste processing plant at Windscale.

/contd.

In a general discussion on strategy, Keith Rushworth made the following suggestions:

1. There should be a permanent Chairman whose function was to see that things got done, and who would therefore be responsible if they were not.
2. NEC meetings should be less frequent, eg. every 3 months
3. The newsletter needed to be excellent - two or three should get together, and members should be encouraged to send in their views. Among other things it should be a policy forum, and 3-monthly accounts should be included.
4. There should be a change of emphasis from national to local.

Colin Fry said he supported Keith generally, but as long as local groups did not exist, NEC activity would have to be more frequent than 3 months. Tony Whittaker outlined the efforts made in the early days of the party, and pointed out that they were very much along the lines Keith had suggested. The results had been disappointing then, but perhaps the time was ripe for a further attempt.

It was felt that the NEC should consist of regional delegates, but it was pointed out that this had always been the aim. It was agreed that each NEC member should be given responsibility for a specific area of the country. John Luck stressed the importance of building up local relationships.

Keith Rushworth felt that a leader was necessary in the sense of a progress chaser rather than someone who could command the attention of the media. Mike Benfield suggested that there were three leadership functions: 1. a national figure; 2. someone who could control meetings; and 3. an Admin. Dictator (i.e. Secretary). A formal proposition by Mike was carried that Conference directs the NEC to stress that the major emphasis of their task was to develop regional structures with the object of replacing themselves with a national assembly of delegates.

John Luck was asked about his successful campaign and his subsequent experience as a district councillor. He said he was still learning. (But please note everybody - it can be done - it has been done).

The idea of a further name-change was briefly discussed, and Clive Lord said that a suggestion had been received from Australia that we should change our name to Values, so that all ecological parties would have the same name. There was however no support for this.

Please note everyone that the proposals for regional and local action will need your help!

Clive Lord

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K.M. Benfield,
New Buildings,
Trinity St,
Coventry

STOP PRESS 2.10.76
Jonathan Tyler's ^{candidacy} has now been announced in the press. The NEC proposes to back his campaign at Walsall North with some national funds, but we obviously cannot afford to blue the lot. Donations and pledges - and practical help - are urgently needed. Please contact Jonathan at 121 Selly Park Rd, Birmingham B29. Tel. 021-472-1088.

Notes from the National ExecutiveTYLER BECOMES NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Jonathan Tyler, the Birmingham lecturer who is fighting Walsall North for the EP, was elected Chairman of the party at the first meeting of the 1976-77 National Executive Committee, held in Birmingham on October 3rd.

When the EP was founded (as "People"), its first chairman was Tony Whittaker. Now absorbed with work on his farm, Tony is not able to be so active on the Party's behalf - though he very ably chaired the annual conference at Sheffield.

During 1975-76, the party functioned without a Chairman. Members of the NEC all had special functions to perform, and chairmanship of NEC meetings rotated. There has been considerable discussion in the NEC about the merits and demerits of having a Party Leader or Chairman, and at least it was decided that, while the anarchistic structure of the party precludes anything in the nature of a Party Leader, nonetheless the actual business of running the party's day-to-day affairs would be much easier if a Chairman were appointed. This view was voiced at a previous NEC meeting by Michael Benfield, and was put forward in the newly constituted NEC by Keith Rushworth, who argued that one important function of such a Chairman would be to be kicked if anything went wrong.

Since the NEC has also decided to hold most of its meetings in Birmingham during the coming year, instead of rotating between different parts of the country as in the past, it made sense to ask Jonathan Tyler, at whose Birmingham home most meetings will be held, to take on the job. He was unanimously elected.

Members may also like to know that Jonathan is commencing to build up a collection of reference material which will be available to local groups and individuals. This reference material will be kept in Birmingham.

Official functions were divided up among the new NEC as follows:

National Chairman: Jonathan Tyler.
 National Secretary: Clive Lord.
 Information Officer: Colin Fry.
 Deputy Information Officer: Keith Rushworth.
 Treasurer (co-opted): Christine Rushworth.
 Campaign Co-ordinator: John Davenport.
 Membership Secretary: Elizabeth Davenport.

In accordance with the Conference directive that the NEC should begin to phase itself out of existence by liaising with local groups in an effort to develop the cellular structure of the party, individual NEC members adopted responsibility for different areas of the country as follows:

Leeds and West Yorkshire... Keith Rushworth.
 Kirklees... Clive Lord.
 London... Colin Fry.
 Worcester and Malvern... Elizabeth Davenport and Colin Fry.
 West Midlands... Jonathan Tyler.
 Sussex and the South-East... John Luck.
 Sheffield and South Yorkshire... Eric Jones.
 Cornwall... Teddy Goldsmith.

Members, sympathisers and inquirers living in these areas should note the national official responsible for their part of the world, and any requests for assistance in organising local meetings, contacting local media, fighting local elections, etc., should in the first instance be channelled through that person.

However, it is anticipated that John Davenport - though not responsible for a specific area - will have considerable contact with all local branches in his capacity as Campaign Co-ordinator. He will be co-ordinating the national effort to increase EP representation on local councils in the elections of May 1977.

The next NEC meeting will be held at 121 Selly Park Rd, Birmingham 29, on Sunday 21st November at 2 pm.
 NB: all paid-up full members are entitled to attend NEC meetings.

news from local groups

LONDON

Steve Lambert and Marketta Lahti are busily trying to get the London branch of the Ecology Party off the ground and into orbit. As the Newsletter went to press, news was received that a meeting was to be held at 7 pm on Thursday, October 7th, at 19 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, London SW3. The meeting was being convened by Steve Lambert, whose address is 23 Hamilton Rd, Hayes, Middx (tel: 01-848-4846). A lot of help, we understand, is being given by Marketta Lahti, who attended Conference as unofficial London representative. Her address is 11a Kensington Park Rd, London W11 (tel: 01-727-8270). We hope to publish a report of the meeting in the next Newsletter.

SUSSEX

Vivian Bowser, of Orcharddown, Filching, Polegate, Sussex BN26 5QA, has offered to act as Area-Co-ordinator for Sussex, and proposes to call a meeting of EP members in that area. Vivian also tells us that his wife is willing to stand as EP candidate for the Cuckmere division of East Sussex at the Spring 1977 local elections.

N.W. SURREY

On Tuesday 19th October, at 8 pm, a special meeting on fluoridation is being held by the N.W. Surrey Group of the EP to discuss proposals for the fluoridation of water in the county of Surrey during 1977. Those interested should contact the Chairman of the N.W. Surrey Group, Mr E H Haywood, 6 Sanway Rd, Byfleet, Surrey (tel: Byfleet 44335).

international reportTHE AUSTRALIA PARTY

Like the New Zealand Values Party, the Australia Party is not exclusively concerned with specifically or overtly ecological issues, but embraces a wide range of policies on liberal issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, and sees itself as a "Centre" party.

Its economic policies, however, are based squarely on the principles outlined in Blueprint for Survival and The Limits to Growth.

We have received a copy of Economics for the Future - and the Present, the party's manifesto of economic policies. Reference is made in this well-produced black-and-white booklet to both the above-named works, as well as Mankind at the Turning Point by Pestel and Mesarovic. In two italicised paragraphs on p 2, the basic philosophy of the Australia Party is set out, thus:

"...we must start now, in Australia and in the world as a whole, to move towards a sustainable economy, an economy in equilibrium with world resources, with the environment, and with all the other life-systems on which our own depends. Only such an economy can continue beyond the time it takes to use up our geological resources. Its achievement calls for stabilisation of world population as soon as possible. To be truly sustainable the economy must operate within a stable society, and this demands greater justice and greater equality of wealth within and between nations.

"Nor is survival worthwhile unless the rights and dignity of every individual are established and maintained; we therefore point to a society in which every individual has the maximum possible opportunity for a voice in the decisions which affect him, in whatever institutions they may be made. We would seek, within a co-operatively planned economy, the maximum retention of individual economic initiative, in the social, artistic and spiritual spheres, initiative and creativity would only be constrained by the essential obligation to consider the rights and feelings of others."

The Australia Party has a wide range of membership, including tradesmen, teachers, architects and businessmen, and nearly half its members are women.

Party policies must be approved by ballot of all members wishing to vote on an issue. Policies are initially drafted by twenty or more policy groups, each of which is open to all members of the party to join, either by correspondence or in-person. Ballots are conducted in the AP's national journal, Reform.

The party's policy booklet, published in 1974 and currently in process of updating, contains over 550 policy items and is such a valuable summary of modern political policy that it has been widely used by Social Studies students.

"Updating the booklet is a problem," we are told. "At present a series of current policy papers is being prepared for at least interim use."

Bearing in mind the detailed debate on policy amendments and the mechanism of policy formation at Conference this year, the Australia Party's way of doing things may provide us with some food for thought.

-- CF

address checklist: NEC members

ELIZABETH DAVENPORT: c/o Greenways, 200 Wells Rd, Malvern Wells, Worcs.

JOHN DAVENPORT: 2 The Old Vicarage, 26 Main Rd, Kempsey, Worcs (tel: 0905-820489)

COLIN FRY: c/o Greenways, 200 Wells Rd, Malvern Wells, Worcs.

EDWARD R GOLDSMITH; 73 Molesworth St, Wadebridge, Cornwall (tel: Wadebridge 2996/7)

ERIC JONES: 18 Buttermere Close, Anston, Sheffield S31 7GA

CLIVE LORD: 44 Upper Batley Low Lane, Batley, W Yorks (tel: Batley 472767)

JOHN N.S. LUCK: 20 Military Rd, Rye, E. Sussex

KEITH RUSHWORTH: 8 The Mount, Leeds LS17 7QU (tel: 0532-672193)

JONATHAN TYLER: 121 Selly Park Rd, Birmingham 29 (tel: 021-472-1088)

special reportFIGHT TO STOP EXTENSIONS AT WINDSCALE

Shortly before the annual conference was due to be held, Helen Pennell, a London EP member, telephoned several NEC members and officials to tell them that Half-Life, an organisation of people in the Lancashire and Cumbria area who are acutely concerned about the dangers from the various nuclear installations in their area, were seeking urgent support.

A public meeting was being called by Cumbria County Council in Whitehaven on September 29th to discuss British Nuclear Fuels' application to extend the nuclear plant at Windscale, with the object of enlarging the facilities for processing nuclear waste.

Half-Life were urging that this issue was of too great an importance to be left solely to the local authority, and were pressing Peter Shore, the Environment Secretary, to make use of a Planning Inquiry Commission in order to put the BNFL proposals under public scrutiny at national level.

Planning Inquiry Commissions were first provided for in the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act, and the provision was carried over into the 1971 Planning Act. But the mechanism of a P.I.C. has never been used. If Half-Life are successful in persuading the Government to use the P.I.C. in this case, they will be scoring an important historic "first."

A resolution urging the party to support Half-Life in their campaign was put to Conference by Colin Fry and Elizabeth Davenport, and was unanimously carried.

Although the Conference debate on this issue was held in the nick of time - only two days before the relevant meeting was due to be held at Whitehaven - the Party endeavoured to make its views known to both the local and national authorities involved.

National Secretary Clive Lord immediately sent letters detailing the resolution to both the County Planning Officer in Cumbria and the Secretary of State for the Environment. The press and other media were also informed.

It is important that pressure should not be relaxed in this matter. A report by David Fishlock in The Financial Times for October 7th states that BNFL foresee a delay of two years in starting the £750 million reconstruction of their Windscale "factory" if Shore accedes to pressure from environmental groups and calls in the planning application pending a public inquiry.

Sir Brian Flowers, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution whose report was published recently, sent a message to the Whitehaven public meeting in which he supported the proposed extensions.

In his message, Sir Brian said that he hoped the proposed extensions would proceed as quickly as possible "to provide satisfactory facilities covered by the present application - that is, in the renovating of Magnox reprocessing facilities, development of the Harvest glassification technique as a very important step towards the long-term disposal of radio-active wastes; the provision of oxide reprocessing plant for the domestic programme and export; the appropriate support site services."

These are the four basic features of BNFL's planning application, states Fishlock, who adds that the company says they are inseparable in what it envisages as "an integrated redevelopment of one of Britain's oldest nuclear factories."

Delay, says Fishlock, could have repercussions for the domestic nuclear power programme, as well as affecting plans for the processing of nuclear waste from overseas. Shortage of storage capacity for nuclear waste has already forced BNFL to shut down one of its reactors at Calder Hall and use it as a waste store.

If this trend continues, BNFL claim, domestic electricity prices will go up, as "nuclear electricity is about one-third cheaper than that from coal."

It is interesting to note that Cumbria County Council's "independent adviser" on environmental matters - including this - is Prof. J. H. Fremlin, a radiobiologist from the University of Birmingham.

Jonathan Tyler, please note! Can you have a chat with Prof. Fremlin before he makes his recommendations?

The County Council's decision is expected in two weeks' time. Meanwhile, why not write to your local press, your MP, Peter Shore, Cumbria C.C., Prof. Fremlin, etc?

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

In order to fight elections at both local and national level, the Party needs to keep its funds healthy - and that means that your subscription is vital. In future, subscription reminders will be sent out with individual copies of the Newsletter to those members whose subs are due. We hope for a prompt response. The lives and health of future generations may well depend on what we are doing - so asking for your subscription to be renewed promptly is not just a rip-off.