

EDITORIAL

Colin Fry, Information Officer, has resigned rather suddenly from the Party, after producing a very good newsletter in October. The immediate result of this is that the production of this newsletter has fallen to me as Deputy Information Officer. Being unprepared for this and having no opportunity to get the letter out on time (15 December), I took the decision to put it out early in January so that it wouldn't get put aside by members in their enthusiasm for the recent festivities. I offer my apologies for the delay and hope the letter has been worth waiting for.

I feel I might also have some right to ask for apologies for the lack of articles submitted. I realise that many members feel that they have done enough when they've paid their annual subscription --- and without subscriptions there's no doubt we would be in a very sorry state. But there are a fair number of members doing things which we would all be interested in, and unless these things are put in writing nobody finds out about them. Furthermore, many members have views on what we should be doing and what our policies should be. These views should be aired.

Communication is the life-blood of any organisation. This Newsletter is the Ecology Party's life-blood. Use it. Write for it. Make it work.

We don't have many years left. Write NOW and send to :

K.M. Rushworth
8 The Mount
Leeds LS17 7QU.

FORWARDS ----- The May Elections

There are now only four months to go to the local elections in May. This year they are for County Councils and are happening everywhere in England, Wales and Scotland. We have a real chance to make an impact here by sheer numbers of candidates -- and remember, every new, successful political party makes its first impression by numbers of candidates, not by number of votes.

Of the six who stood last May we might hope for the majority standing again; at least one is definitely committed to doing so and even John Davenport, who was elected last year to his Parish Council, is considering standing for the County Councils as well. In addition, there are three more candidates in Leeds, at least one in West Midlands, one in Sussex and our London group are candidate hunting. Rumours from Malvern (Worcs) and Cornwall indicate a possible further eight. Altogether there are nearly 20 either confirmed or possible, which with luck and effort could be 30.

It's a simple matter of the more the merrier. Every additional candidate is a step nearer to making this party a real influence in the country, a step away from the plutonium rat-race economy.

Why Not You ? I've asked many people this question, and I'm normally met with fearful tremors about all those public speeches to enormous audiences, and the terrors of doorstep canvassing. Sad, because you don't need to do either of these things. When I stood in Leeds last May I scared the pants off all the other candidates, without a single doorstep canvass, or a single public speech, or any appearances on radio or T.V.

How ? By 100% leafleting, covering over 6,000 households. And this really wasn't difficult, when you consider how many houses one person can leaflet in the course of an evening. Also, all sorts of people tend to help whether they understand the word "Ecology" or not; involvement in an election and the promise of a post-election party are sufficient reward for many.

And the Press ? You simply send them a copy of your election address (the piece of paper you drop through people's door) and hope for a mention. If you are interviewed by someone from your local paper it will be a very low-powered affair, and I'm sure anybody in the party must know a thousand times more about Ecology than their local cub reporter.

And the T.V. ? If you want to be on the box, push like mad. See if you know someone who knows someone ---- otherwise, just forget it.

And all the red tape and organisation?

John Davenport and I are producing a booklet covering this and other things in detail, which will be available soon. But basically, its a matter of being on the electoral roll, collecting ten signatures on a piece of paper from other electors (my wife and 9 neighbours who had never even heard of Ecology signed for me), writing your election address and taking it to a cheap printer (good duplicating is just as good -- electronic stencils can reproduce photos), and getting all your leaflets put through letterboxes.

And if you get elected ? We all thought there was no risk of this last year, but two of our candidates got quite a shock. It seems that if you're standing outside a city or large town you might get elected, and as a county councillor there could be quite alot of work. If the prospect really worries you, only leaflet half the houses in your area. Otherwise, remember that the majority of our present councillors are so barmy that they believe economic growth can go on for ever, and yet they manage.

And then theres the money. The N.E.C. will give you what support it can, but you'll need to collect locally and dig into your own pocket. The only major expense is printing, so the cost really depends on how big your area is, how much of it you leaflet and how cheap or expensive the printer you use is.

If you think you might be interested, or know someone else who might stand, give John Davenport a buzz (0905 820489).

The only way to make a politician think is to hit him in his ballot box. Lets all do it together and make their eyes water.

Keith Rushworth

NEWS FROM LOCAL GROUPS

London

The London Branch is now fully established and meeting every two weeks on the first and third Thursdays of each month (7pm, 19 Cheyne Walk, S.W.3). Contact -- Steve Lambert. Telephone (01)- 848-4846, evenings.

Attendance at present is fairly small but regular, and concerted efforts are being made for systematic publicity.

Most of the discussion & action so far has been concerned with organising ourselves and with the 'Windscale' issue. We are now concentrating on how we see our role in fuxture, with particular emphasis on strategy for the G.L.C. elections in May 1977 when we hope to field several candidates.

Travelling across a city the size of London hinders those who live on the outskirts and we are, therefore, anxious to form more local groups as soon as numbers permit. So let us at least know that you exist - even if you are unable to attend the meetings, we like to know you are there, and come election time, every extra pair of hands is useful.

Steve Lambert.

Sussex

An inaugural meeting of the Sussex group of the Ecology Party was held at Orcharddown, Filching, Sussex on 28 November 1976.

There was a wide range of discussion based on the manifesto and attention was drawn to what were felt to be current inadequacies, notably in the education, land tenure and defence sections. The whole document was criticised for being 'too heavy' and difficult to read.

There was also criticism of the Party's ability to respond to enquiries.

The group supports a change of Party colours to brown and green.

Beryl Bowser was adopted as E.P. candidate for the Cuckmere ward in the forthcoming County Council elections and she reported that she had already been contacted by the local press.

John Luck.

Sandwell, west Midlands.

Peter Rout, who will be standing in May's local elections in Sandwell, west Midlands, introduced himself to his electors by standing in a local by-election in November. He produced his

election address on his own duplicator but unfortunately was unable to obtain an electronic stencil at the time. Despite the slightly amateur appearance of the result he polled over 1% of the vote. In value for money terms this is probably a record. (walsall cost us nearly £4 per vote --- Ouch).

Leeds

The Leeds branch recently joined with the local groups of FOE. and Consec. in an anti nuclear demonstration in the centre of Leeds. A fuller report on the demo should appear in the next issue of Good Earth (not the one with this newsletter).

More to the point of Ecology Party business, there will be at least four candidates in and around Leeds in the May elections. One is Keith Rushworth, who stood last year after being introduced to the party by Clive Lord, and the new ones this year are David Corrie, long active in Consec in Leeds; Steve Garnett, excavated from records of the 'people' campaign in Leeds in 1974; and Keith Baxter, introduced by Steve after being impressed with a letter in the Guardian from another E.P. member.

Keith Baxter has been elected treasurer and a local branch account has been opened. The secretary is assembling a list of local contacts to receive the branch newsletter, the first copy of which should go out in January to start the ball rolling for the elections.

Crim Rushworth.

WALSALL NORTH ELECTION

An article by Jonathan Tyler had not found it's way through the post by the deadline for this newsletter and therefore will be appearing in the next newsletter. However, if you were not involved directly in the campaign you should find enclosed a copy of Jonathan's Election address to peruse.

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*****ECOLOGY PARTY PENS*****

Pop-up biros (refillable) inscribed "Support the Ecology Party" are now available at 10 for £1.00, post free. They are an unusual design and write well. Sell for 12p to get the name around and make a few pennies. Order from Keith Rushworth.

DEFENCE POLICY

TO DEFEND OR NOT TO DEFEND

The Ecology party has always had a pacifist streak in it - people who do not wish to harm our planet, who wish to have a good life for future generations, who wish for the simpler life themselves, are not the sort that go to war easily. However the positive decision not to defend ones nation must rest on national argument not feelings. It seems to me that the only arguments put forward for scratching defence from our budget are as follows :

- 1) We'll never be attacked anyway.
- 2) We'll lose anyway.
- 3) Defending ourselves is expensive.
- 4) We might use our forces to attack someone else.
- 5) We can rely on our present allies to defend us.
- 6) War might become nuclear - unthinkable.

I think most people will readily accept the proposition that we'll never be attacked as absurd. The Ecology Party has in a sense been founded to counteract human greed and we should all be aware of the lengths to which greed will take the most unprincipled members of our race. To have no defence would simply invite a takeover.

The judgement that we will lose anyway is one which only a brilliant and knowledgeable military strategist can make and then it would still only be opinion. The continuing impact of technology on warfare during this century has made each new war impossible to predict. To say we will lose the next war is pure emotional defeatism - it can never be a sound judgement (unless, of course, we do give up defending ourselves).

The third argument is that defence is expensive. So it is. The money thus spent would go a long way towards fulfilling human needs, and presumably under the Ecology Party the money would be spent on need, not greed. But saving resources for the future is of no avail if somebody else comes to take them today. It is rather like saving money on fire insurance when your house is next to a match factory. A cheap defence policy would be no more use than a cheap insurance policy with a fly-by-night company.

The contention that we might use our forces to attack another country is one that I find particularly strange coming from other E.P. members. I'm sure that conservationists would be the last people to start a war, so if we are considering a situation in which we have an ecological government, this should be the last of our worries.

The idea of relying on other people to defend us is a good one

which might work. But since our other policies are based on an increased degree of responsibility at all levels and self-sufficiency where ever possible, to use this sort of reasoning with regard to defence would be to show an obvious inconsistency with our overall philosophy.

The proposition that we should dispose of our nuclear deterrent on the grounds that a nuclear holocaust is unthinkable, has been a subject of debate for years. The cornerstone of this proposition is the phrase "Better red than dead", (unless, of course, it relies on one of the other arguments above, for instance, that we rely on allies and shelter under the American Nuclear umbrella). I would agree with this if being 'Red' meant being Ecological, but it doesn't - it means being unecological and undemocratic as well. The two opposites of what the Ecology Party stands for.

I believe we should be prepared to stand and defend our beliefs with whatever means are at our disposal, remembering that the stronger we appear to be the less likely we are to have to fight.

A further point is that as the nuclear power industry progresses the distinction between a non-nuclear and a nuclear war becomes increasingly academic. Conventional bombs dropped on nuclear reactors would have much the same effect as an atom bomb - less powerful in explosive terms, but much dirtier in radiation terms, (Imagine one on windscale). Our object therefore must not be clouded by an idealistic commitment to not firing nuclear weapons ourselves, but should be to prevent war altogether. If, unfortunately, this means keeping the nuclear balance of terror for a little longer then we should do it.

I say a little longer* because all the arguments about defence, including those which go on in the Ecology Party, are based on the assumption that the world's armies will always have oil. Clearly within a few decades this will no longer be the case, The whole world strategic situation will then change radically, putting all the trump cards into the hands of the defence, rather as they were in the first world War. We might then be able to put away our more terrifying armaments and still preserve our security.

*** Our defence policy is a continuing subject of controversy. If you have views - - air them in the newsletter. We need a good debate in these pages to arrive at a sound policy ***

NEXT N.E.C. MEETING

SUNDAY 16th JANUARY. 2.00 p.m.
121, SELLY PARK ROAD, BIRMINGHAM 29

ALL WELCOME.

TREASURER'S REPORT

On receiving the bank account on 29.10.76. from the previous treasurer, the balance stood at £770.45. The balance at 1.1.77. after the Walsall North by-election, is £330.02, and I have set out below a breakdown of party expenditure since 29.10.76, and also a detailed breakdown of election expenses.

£770.45

IN since 29.10.76.

Membership - New & renewed	£187.00	
Manifesto & leaflet sale	£ 25.30	
Donations	£ 19.95	
Election donations	£142.51	
Conference fees etc	£ 99.16	
		£473.92
		£1244.37

OUT since 29.10.76.

Election	£700.80	
Conference	£138.34	
Good Earth	£ 45.00	
Miscellaneous i.e.G.F.O., postage, stapler.	£ 30.21	
		£914.35
balance		£330.02

Election Expenses

Donations total £342.51 ----- This figure includes a single donation in Aug 1976 of £200.00 & £59.00 donated by the candidate, the remainder being donated by party members.

Expenditure total £700.80 ----- This figure breakdown :-

Printing including posters	£370.90
Deposit	£150.00
Candidate's expenses	£ 54.47
Election agent's expenses	£ 50.00
C Fry & E Davenport expenses	£ 60.00
Hire of Halls	£ 4.40
Newspaper advert	£ 7.38
Address labels	£ 3.65

NOTES FROM THE N.E.C.

The last N.E.C. meeting on 21.11.76 was attended by a number of observers, including Ron Andrews, Editor of Good Earth. It was agreed that any change in the arrangement between Good Earth and the Party should wait until negotiations to merge Good Earth with Conservation Society News were clearer. (Ed: this years Conservation Society A.G.M. passed a resolution to merge them).

Strategy

There was a long discussion on strategy introduced by the chair-

man, Jonathan Tyler, who said that he had both gone into and come out of the Walsall North campaign uncertain as to precisely what he was trying to achieve. Keith Pushworth said he was quite clear as to what the E.P. should be doing: our strength should be built up from the grass roots via local elections, as agreed at conference. Keith regarded by-elections as a disproportionate diversion of funds.

Clive Lord had an equally clear view. He felt that the grass roots approach was not working; in the party's 4 years existence only Keith himself could demonstrate progress in this way. Clive urged national publicity, especially for the existence of the party and our ideas, as a first priority. Specifically he urged a campaign of press releases, aimed particularly at forcing leading figures, such as Lord Avebury, to generate public debate and the repeated appearance of the E.P. at by-elections.

Finally, an amendment that "The E.P. decides not to support by-elections campaigns unless a strong local group exists to give the candidate adequate credibility" was carried 3 to 1 with 1 abstention (9 to 2 including observers). It was agreed that it was not the intention of this resolution to discourage local groups from fighting by-elections.

Policy Review

The N.E.C. agreed to set up a Policy Review Committee (P.R.C.) as quickly as possible. Eric Jones and Tom Greaves agreed to serve, with John Luck as a possibility and others to be asked. Membership of the committee would, however, be open to any party member prepared to serve on it. The P.R.C. will set its own terms of reference, but will be asked to undertake production of the Campaign Document (a brief manifesto) authorised by conference. (Ed: much of the P.R.C.'s work might be done by post & through the newsletter; the prospect of frequent travel to distant meetings should not, therefore, put people off serving.)

1976 Manifesto

John Luck will be preparing a 6 page insert for the 1975 manifesto to bring it up to date (Ed: pending work by P.R.C.). Orders for inserts, with 10p in stamps, may be sent to John Luck or Clive Lord.

N.E.C. Correspondence

The N.E.C. endorsed a letter to be sent by Alan Kirby to the Australian Prime Minister.

The N.E.C. supports the idea of an eco-international conference (with regard to a letter from Mike Benfield) subject to lack of funds.

Festival of the Environment '77 in Newcastle, May 27th to June 5th.
Any offers to man an E.P. stall? C. Lord

WINDSCALE. CONSERVATION MOVEMENT WINS ROUND ONE.

with the announcement of the Public Enquiry into windscale by Peter Shore, round one of the windscale debate has gone to us. Rounds two and three are critical -- the choice of chairman & decision on terms of reference. This might just be the issue to pull the whole movement together; I'm sure everyone in the E.P. will do what they can.

*** JOHN LUCK QUIZZES DAVID STEELE ***

John Luck, Ecology Councillor in Rye, questioned David Steele on Zero-growth in a phone-in programme on Radio 4 on 22 December. John got on the air by virtue of a dozen or so people, mostly E.P. members, phoning in with similar questions from different parts of the country.

Mr Steele had some difficulty in understanding the question but finally came down on the side of growth "to get us out of our present situation". Hopefully misguided ecologists in the Liberal party will take careful note of this.

LEND A HAND

Far too often in the past the N.E.C. seems to have given the impression of having everything well under control. This has never been the case and certainly isn't now. There are always jobs hanging about waiting to be done, and the quicker they get done the faster we will move towards our goal.

Probably our greatest fault in the past has been in not asking for help --- when we did ask for help to address leaflets for the Walsall campaign, the response was heartwarming. So I hope some willing hands will respond to this plea.

Most of the jobs are not particularly skilled. Putting manifestos together, addressing, keeping records and typing if you're skilled and equipped. All these jobs can be done without stirring your stumps further than your local post office. And they are important.

Currently there is a particular need for typists. Clive Lord needs them to help with N.E.C. minutes and I need them to help with the newsletter. We would like a big response so that the work may be thinly spread out. If you think you can help with this or anything else GET IN TOUCH. I promise faithfully that no one will be overloaded as a few were with the Walsall addressing.

we apologise for the type in this issued leaning to the Left. This is not intended to reflect party policy, and we are trying to put it right.

DIRTY MONEY SECTION

There comes a time in every newsletter editor's efforts when he must write about money. Money does not make the world go round - ecology does that - but it does make the Ecology Party go round (when mixed with alot of hard work). I must, therefore, ask you to consider if your subscription is due. Since it's the New Year and the majority of our subs. are due at New Year, it probably is.

For the sake of millions of our species who would doubtless like to be born onto a planet worth living on, please send your sub. now. without it we can't survive.

AND FINALLY

Now you've read this newsletter, I'm sure you'll want to have your news or views in the next one. Ecologists all over the country are waiting to hear what's going on in Liverpool and Cornwall and Essex, and what people are thinking in London and Steeple Bumpstead.

Do it NOW. Having articles in early make the job at this end MUCH easier.

This is your newsletter. USE it. WRITE for it. MAKE it work.

Some important addresses

Clive Lord, National Sec.

44, Upper Batley Low Lane, Batley, w. Yorks. Batley 472767.

Jonathan Tyler, National Chairman

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

John Lavenport, Campaign Officer.

2 The Old Vicarage, 26 Main Rd, Kempsey, worcs. 0905-820489.

Keith Rushworth, Newsletter Editor.

8 The Mount, Alwoodley, Leeds 17. (tel: 0532-672198).

John N.S. Luck, Rye Councillor. N.E.C.

20 Military Rd, Rye Sussex. (tel: Rye 3404).