

A SHORT STATEMENT
OF AIMS AND
POLICIES

THE
Ecology Party
Formerly PEOPLE



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A SHORT STATEMENT OF THE AIMS AND POLICIES OF THE PARTY

The policies of the Ecology Party are based on the principle that mankind must live in harmony with Nature within the limitations of the Earth's finite supply of resources.

WHY WE MUST AIM FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

Ever since it was founded in January 1973 the Ecology Party has warned that an economic crisis triggered by excessive demand for raw materials was likely before long. The first signs that we were right - massive rises in the price of oil, wheat, and many other commodities, leading to the present wave of inflation - came before the end of 1973, even sooner than we expected.

The old political battles over different ways of sharing and creating wealth are irrelevant. Both left and right believe the answer is to resume economic growth as soon as possible. But this is a gamble that new resources will be discovered, or cleverer ways of using scarce resources will be found.

Economic growth means increasing wealth by producing more and more manufactured goods for sale. To do this there has to be an ever-increasing supply of raw materials to feed into industry, and this we do not have. Nowadays most people will agree, if pressed, that economic growth cannot go on indefinitely. The Ecology Party believes that now is the time to call a halt and keep our winnings.

Up to now economic growth has served us well. Our fitted carpets, cars, TVs, refrigerators, new roads, schools, the Health Service and social security benefits have all been paid for out of it. We shall have to get used to the idea that from now on we cannot just take these things for granted. Also, the end of economic growth will lead to unemployment unless the change is properly planned. There are no instant answers to these problems, but the

Ecology Party 'Manifesto for a Sustainable Society' shows that it is possible to combine security with a work incentive, and to suggest other aims in life.

WHAT LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE MEANS IN PRACTICE

Copper, lead, iron, and aluminium are all common metals, but new deposits worth mining have been getting harder to find. And if they are all becoming scarce together, we cannot go on substituting one metal for another. Scientists may come up with all kinds of ideas, but we are setting them shorter and shorter deadlines all the time. To cut a long and disturbing story short, when these and other metals have gone, industry and millions of jobs will go with them. Again recycling helps, but this cannot meet the demands of increasing consumption.

We get our energy from Nature:

Between them, oil and coal provide most of the enormous supplies of energy needed to maintain our present way of life. Both take millions of years to form, so that is how long it will be before Nature provides another supply. Neither can be recycled once they have been burnt. Like metals, oil discoveries are getting harder to find. Nuclear power is often suggested as a way out. This is frighteningly dangerous, particularly if it is used as an excuse to go on expanding the demand for energy.

Living in harmony with Nature means finding safe processes which can go on indefinitely.

It means conserving resources, not wasting them. It means making things to last instead of just to provide jobs and money. There will be room for growth in agriculture, education, leisure, and several other areas, but a 'steady state' (zero growth) economy means deliberately not aiming for reflation or an economic upturn, because of the danger that it would cause a crisis even worse than the present one.

We get our food from Nature:

Practically everything we eat is a part of Nature. Unless we control pollution by

industrial wastes, artificial fertilizers and pesticides, the environment will be damaged beyond repair and our food supply endangered.

We get our raw materials from Nature:

Paper, building timber, rayon, and most of our furniture are made from trees, and we're felling them faster than they can grow. It would help a little if we recycled more paper, but in the long run we still have to work in balance with Nature.

If you think these shortages are a problem for your children and grandchildren you are wrong. They are happening now. But please remember that their future is in your hands. The warning signs are there already: is it right to ignore them? A total economic collapse could be avoided quite easily, but we are heading straight for it at present: worthless money, no food, black markets which the poor cannot afford, wars over the last oilwells, warships hijacking cargoes, reprisals with nuclear weapons. This is not fiction, it could all happen if we do not plan alternatives in time.

This is what living in harmony with Nature is all about.

Man himself is a part of Nature:

An important ecological (natural) rule is that population size must be kept steady. It is obvious that a growing population must sooner or later become too big to be supported by the Earth's resources. Lemmings jump into the sea by the thousand. Mankind is supposed to be intelligent enough to see that contraception is more pleasant than suicide, starvation, or wars.

The Earth can either support a large population at a low standard of living, or fewer people in civilised comfort. The choice is ours.

It is also important that we should live as part of a community. Not very long ago most people lived in towns and villages small enough for everyone to know everyone else. Nowadays established communities are rare, and yet they are still being destroyed by town planners. People are more often isolated from rather than friendly with their neighbours. Loneliness and insecurity haunt our society. We must avoid the inbreeding and parochial

outlook which was sometimes found, but if we are to live in harmony with Nature we must organize ourselves around the small community once again.

WHY A NEW POLITICAL PARTY IS NECESSARY

At present we live in perpetual fear that one day we might lose the economic gamble. But before the idea of a sustainable society, and the policies needed to create it are widely accepted, they will have to be explained on TV and in the newspapers, and then discussed at home, in pubs and amongst workmates. This will mean temporary unpopularity, and no other party will risk it.

But in any case our ecological view would be like a heart transplant to any of them:

From now on, the main political battles will not be between Socialists and Tories, but between defenders of economic growth and those of us who are trying to build a Sustainable Society.

OUR POLICIES

The Ecology Party is working out the policies needed to make the change over from our present way of life as smooth as possible. Our short and long term policies are spelled out in greater detail in our "Manifesto for a Sustainable Society", price 50p. Here are some of the more important points from it.

GOVERNMENT

Devolution of power is really about ways of giving ordinary people more say about what happens to them. Our Manifesto proposes several reforms with this aim in view.

DECENTRALISATION

People will be encouraged to move out of the big cities, to change from industrial to agricultural work, and to live closer to their work.

POPULATION

Our policies will encourage families to keep down the number of children they have to one or two. More people means worse overcrowding and less wealth for each person. If the population of Britain can be reduced to 40 million over a period of years we could all live in reasonable comfort, grow enough food in this country, and not have to depend on imports at all.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Unemployment is the most serious problem that we are likely to face in the next few years. We cannot expect anyone to listen to the rest of our ideas unless we can remove this as a basic fear. This can be done by introducing a National Income scheme under which each person receives either cash or tax credits each week to cover basic needs. This would have to be paid for out of taxation, but there would be no other tax allowances or state benefits or pensions. People could earn money without losing their National Income, so that anyone working would always be better off than someone not working.

Some people have doubts about the National Income scheme when they hear of it for the first time. As our full Manifesto explains, any other way of preventing hardship without economic growth runs into serious trouble. In fact the Tory government drew up a similar scheme in 1972! If you object to giving something for nothing, remember the 'Welfare State' has been doing that for years! On the contrary, our National Income provides a work incentive even when there is less paid work to do.

EDUCATION

The aim is to create an educational system in which all children have equal opportunity and in which there is a very close link between the local community and the schools, each helping the other and sharing facilities.

LAND TENURE

Land is a valuable asset which must be used with care. Everyone should have a share in its use. All land would be held in trust for the community and managed by an independent body of land stewards.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

The main aims are to lead Britain towards self-sufficiency in foods which can be produced here, and to persuade farmers that the use of artificial fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc. are less effective in the long run than using organic methods.

NATURAL RESOURCES

These will be managed not exploited. Waste will be minimised by recycling and industry will be encouraged to make long life goods.

BUILDINGS

The needless destruction of buildings and the damage this does to town communities will be stopped. People will be encouraged to own their own homes. New buildings will be designed to last a long time, to be adaptable and to make the best use of energy saving devices.

INDUSTRY

The Ecology Party believes that most commercial and industrial firms should be community based with employees having the opportunity to be co-owners. They would then have to share responsibility for decisions as well as benefits. Also there will be less need for mechanisation. Production should be geared to actual needs rather than artificial desires stimulated by advertising.

POLLUTION

Strict measures will be introduced to control and prevent pollution.

TRANSPORT

Few people want to do away with the motor car, but it is dangerous, it pollutes the atmosphere, and much valuable agricultural land is lost to road construction. Measures must be taken to correct these, but in the long term the future of the motor car will be threatened by the depletion of oil resources. So, public transport must be improved and some new forms of personal transport, which use renewable energy sources must be found.

ENERGY AND FUEL

Most electricity is generated by burning oil, coal or gas. Alternatives must be found which are safe and which will last indefinitely. No more nuclear power stations will be built until safe methods of disposal of waste have been found.

FOREIGN POLICY

The party plans to spread awareness of ecological ideas throughout Europe. Mutual cooperation on a basis of self-sufficiency is essential to world peace and stability. Exploitation of the Third World will be diminished.

DEFENCE

Armed forces would be reduced to a well-trained but lightly armed force as our contribution to U.N. peace-keeping activities. There would be unilateral nuclear disarmament and U.S. armed forces would be required to leave Britain.

ECONOMY

The aim is a steady state economy based on stock rather than flow. This means limiting consumption and assessing how well off we are from what we have rather than how quickly we use things. Demand has to be kept down and only then will it be possible to tackle inflation, trade deficits, and the stability of the pound with any hope of success.

This outline shows that the Ecology Party is prepared to face facts, even to the extent of courting temporary unpopularity. If you want to read more about our policies please send for "A Manifesto for a Sustainable Society" price 50p plus 15p packaging and postage. Copies may be obtained from any national official:

Clive Lord, 44. Upper Batley Low Lane, Batley
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(Correct in November 1975).