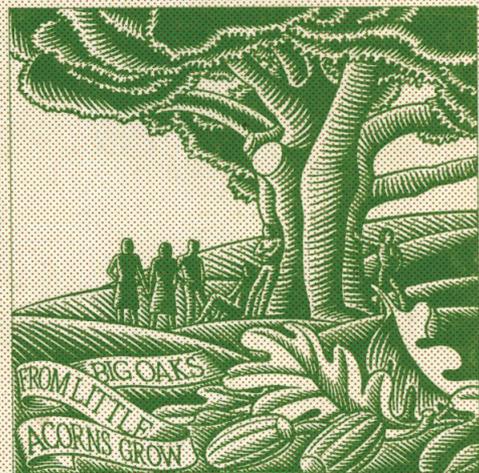
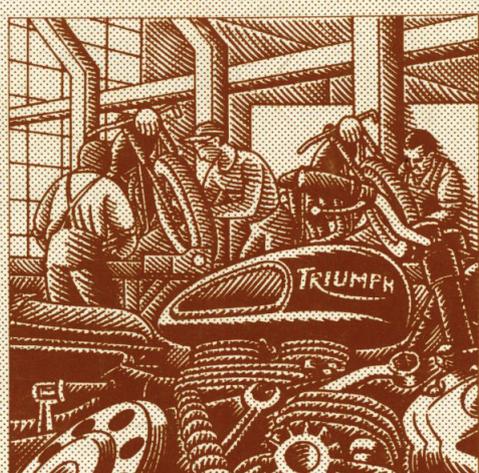
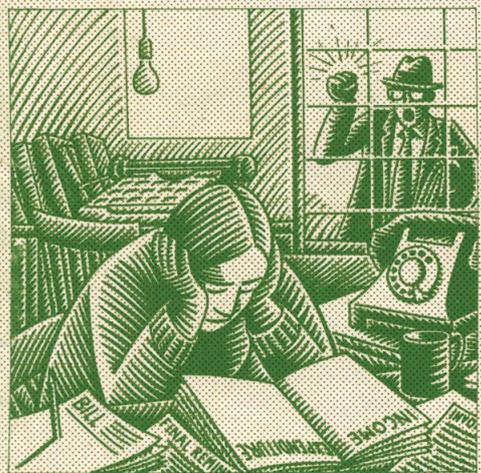
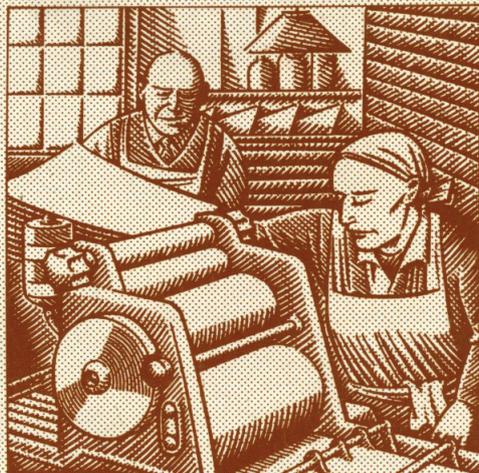
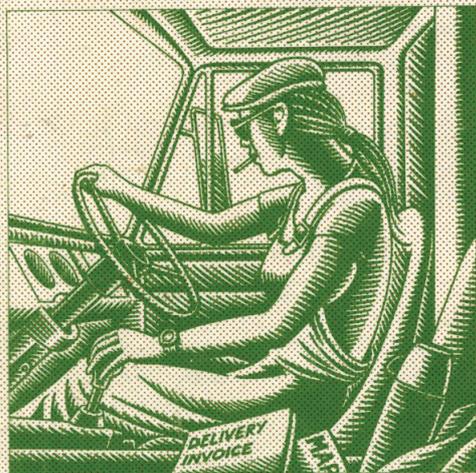


UNDERCURRENTS

CO-OPERATORS FAIR ISSUE



The Magazine of Radical Alternatives and Community Technology

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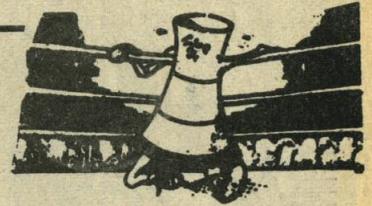
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eddies

Greenpeace in the dock



HOT TIP FOR THE ANTI-NUKE BRIGADE:

INSIDE SOURCES advise me that some sort of Nuclear Power Station is to be constructed in the West Country in close proximity to Bodmin Moor. There may also be two or three others, somewhere in Scotland, possibly one in Wales, the North of England and somewhere in the South East (no, not Dungeness 'C'!). These stations are something to do with our PBW. Public statements on the station(s) will fall back on the present Government's nuclear power expansion policy and the fact that our coal-burning stations are causing pollution problems. The project for the West Country is quite well advanced, and the public is to be told that growing demand for power in the West makes a new Nuclear Station vital.

GREENPEACE LTD have been fined £800 for their activities in trying to prevent spent nuclear fuel from docking at Barrow. More than that, they will have to pay the costs of the case brought against them by the British Transport Docks Board which could add up to thousands.

The attempt had been made by four inflatable dinghies launched from Greenpeace's boat 'The Rainbow Warrior' to prevent the 'Pacific Fisher' from tying up. Out of respect for the dangerous nature of the Pacific Fisher's cargo, the Rainbow Warrior itself rather than provoke a collision, took off for the Isle of Man. The Pacific Fisher did finally dock, despite the presence of the dinghies, one of which was crushed between the hull of the ship and the pontoon. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

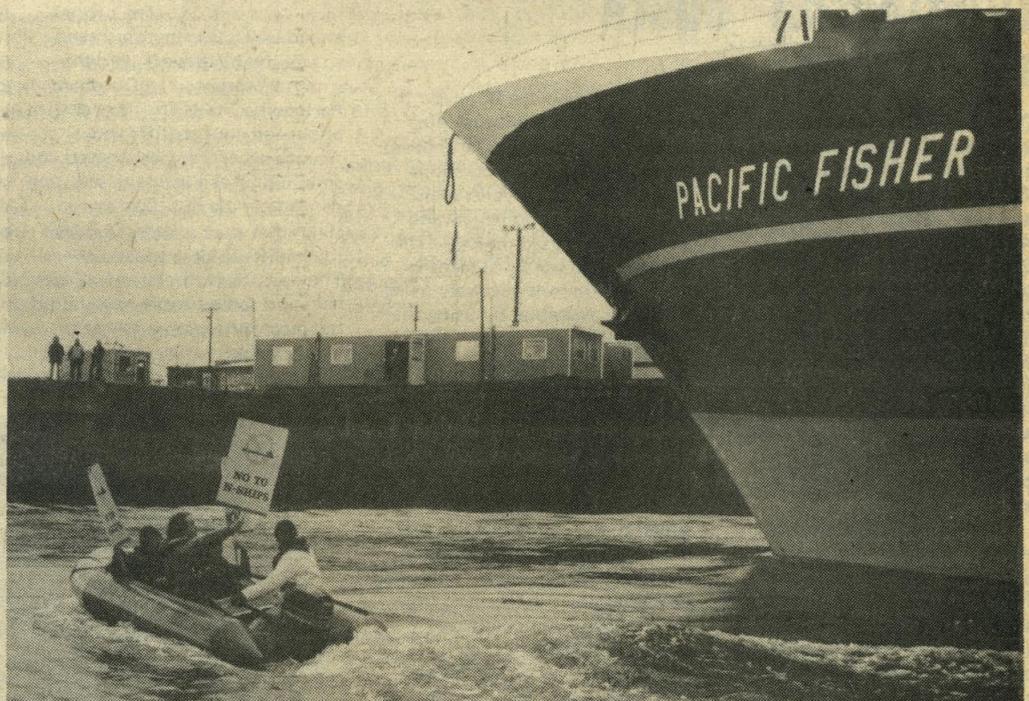
At the court hearing Greenpeace took the opportunity to point out:—

— The U.K. does not have the capability nor the expertise to reprocess large quantities of spent oxide fuel. Only 200 or so tonnes has been treated successfully at plants at Windscale and Cap de la Hague in France, both being plants with long histories of leaks, technical hitches, panics, and errors that tend to take place where there are humans about. The contract between BNFL Ltd. and Japan is for 1,600 tonnes.

— The UK or France are being used as nuclear dustbins by foreign states anxious to be rid of their own dangerous and embarrassing waste.

The Judge imposed a fine of £800 on the company and its three directors, but commented '*That they are honourable people I accept. I do not think prison is the place for them.*' The members of Greenpeace said that while they respect the judicial system and intend to act within the law, the campaign against nuclear waste dumping would continue. Indeed, on 18th June 8 members of the Barrow and district Action group, including Peter Wilkinson, a Greenpeace director, boarded the pontoon crane that is used to unload the nuclear waste flasks

series of protests in and around Barrow that have included a march of 700 people led by Albert Booth, M.P. Barrow is particularly vulnerable, as Peter Wilkinson pointed out 'With Windscale and Drigg plutonium nitrate shipments to the North, Heysham nuclear plant to the south, the sea to the west, one road out to the east and spent nuclear fuel shipments, nuclear submarines, and now a gas terminal threatening in the middle of the town . . . it is hardly surprising the residents of Barrow are beginning to feel uncomfortable. Greenpeace's new postal address is P.O. Box 371, Community Sports Centre, Columbo Street, London SE1 8DN, and they would



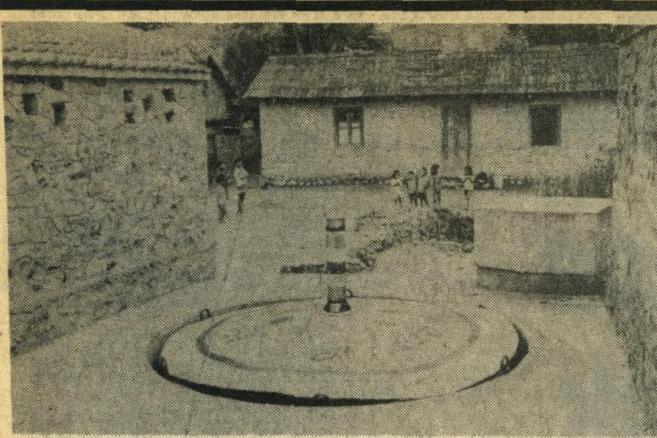
Greenpeace dinghies try to delay nuclear waste landing at Barrow

from Japan. After being chained to the mobile crane for two hours, two of the group were cut free and released. No one was arrested.

The incidents are the latest in a

welcome any donations towards their court costs and continuing campaign, not only in Barrow but in the rest of the U.K. and elsewhere.

NUPE, the National Union of Public Employees, has just adopted a resolution opposing nuclear power at its annual conference. It was proposed by the Newcastle district branch, and carried overwhelmingly. It has about 700,000 members.



Biogas

THIS SEEMS to us about the most appropriate of appropriate technologies: The gas plant pictured above, which feeds off four public latrines in a Tibetan refugee camp in Nepal, also serves as a community prayer wheel. Such prayer wheels are common in Nepal; passersby given them a spin. To produce energy to light the camp and provide high-nutrient fertilizer, the animal manure and human waste in the digester need to be regularly agitated. This is done when people turn the wheel, sending up a prayer.

Dartington ousts squatters

DARTINGTON HALL is associated by many with the civilised face of decentralism. They help Vole and Resurgence and have various schemes to revitalise rural industries. Skolimowski has his eco-philosophy centre and Lord Young was the founder of the London 'Mutual Aid' Centre. Although the term 'mutual aid' was borrowed from an anarchist, the anarchist in question was a kindly old Victorian one called Kropotkin, who wouldn't hurt a flea, and being long dead can now be safely venerated.

Dartington are respectable enough to be given properties such as the spacious Durdham Park in Bristol. This building was taken over by squatters who for twenty months have been living communally and using the house to stage exhibitions, as rehearsal rooms for local rock bands, or for use by film and photographic co-ops. Meeting space for groups such as Bristol Men against Sexism and Peace News readers groups were provided, as was emergency housing, often referred through housing associations, Bristol and Avon Social Services

'Biogas Prayerwheel'

Alex Fazio, who designed the digester, and Robert Hamburg now run an organisation called OARS: Omega-Alpha Recycling Systems. They are now hard at work designing and building an experimental farm in West Virginia that will employ principles of recycling, utilise solar energy, and so on. If there's more imagination where the digester/prayer wheel idea came from OAR's ought to be a pretty exciting project. If you'd like to learn more about OARS, write to Robert Hamburg, OARS, Route 1 Box 51, Orma, West Virginia 25268.

—T.T. (with thanks to Reconnection)

and Citizens Advice Bureaux. In a plan for a 'Bristol Mutual Aid Centre' submitted to Dartington, proposals for Craft workshops, a tool library, a bicycle repair co-op, a wholefood restaurant and alternative technology exhibition centre were just some of the ideas for constructively using the space available. By using the term 'Mutual Aid Centre' the squatters forced attention to be focussed on what Dartington's pretensions were in this field, and even Dartington did not deny the cogency of the squatters plans.

Dartington accused the squatters of not keeping to their promise of leaving the building by May 31st (already an extended deadline) and the trustees, from the luxury of their (mostly spacious) homes, felt the squatters should do the decent thing and vacate the premises. The squatters, in their turn, felt the Bristol Mutual Aid Centre was an important social asset and should not be closed to enable Dartington to play at property speculation. The accusation that Dartington seem to 'be playing Monopoly' has some foundation in that it was very difficult for

the squatters to find out who even owned the place, and it took months to find out that the boards of 'Pontin Charitable Trust' and the Dartington Hall Trust were identical. It also transpires that the Dartington/Pontin Trust has acquired buildings over the road primarily to enable a covenant stopping building on Durdham Park grounds to be nullified.

As the eviction approached, the squatters agreed to use 'non-violent resistance' i.e. be carried out limp, and go and stir things up at Dartington. They did this by invading Founders' Day (equivalent to school speech day) and tried to put their case to Dartington trustees, employees and students, taking the opportunity to ask inconvenient questions about the hierarchical structure at Dartington. Why was it, for example, for an organisation that believes in 'feminine values' seemingly the only women about the place were secretaries taking down the great thoughts of the men in power?

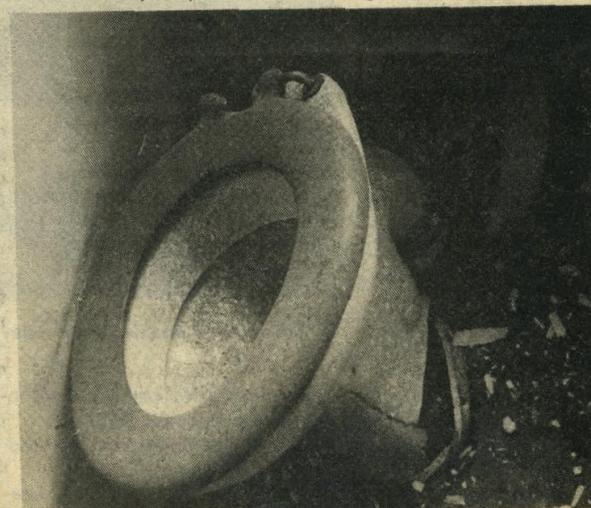
To draw attention to their case, two women, Sandy and Alison locked themselves in the Elmthirst Centre toilet, well-appointed, if surreally, with a Ming Dynasty bronze head. The stunt worked, and soon the story had been taken up by local press and TV. The protest ended when Dartington agreed to call the bailiffs off, and the squatters returned to Durdham Park, exhausted. The next day, about ten court bailiffs and twenty other 'heavies' arrived and smashed up the inside toilets, and carried people out. Dartington claim that they couldn't contact the bailiffs in time to stop them. The day after a 'free festival' was held and some people re-squatted the place, although it seems highly unlikely they will be able to stay, as they are due to appear in court on July 4th, and it seems

the house has already been sold to a property company.

Over the twenty months that the house has been lived in, it has been obvious that there is a great need for a 'Mutual Aid Centre' in Bristol. The St Paul's riot must have finally dispelled the image some outsiders seem to have that Bristol is a nice seaboard University town, good for cream teas and antique shops. As a city, it has some of the worst social tensions in the country, and if the 'small is beautiful' philosophy is ever really to take hold it must prove itself in a harsh city reality, as well as in pretty villages in North Devon.

Furthermore, the Durdham Park saga raises the questions of the use of larger houses. Stately homes and the like can be turned into another amusement for bored tourists, or they can actually be used constructively by the growing numbers of people disillusioned with either the nuclear family or bed-sit death-trap.

Dartington said that they could not accept the plans of the 'Bristol Mutual Aid Centre' partly because they had priority for other schemes, partly because some of the proposals did not fall within their 'charitable' brief, and partly because the squatters did not seem 'responsible' enough (middle-class?). Dartington have the image of being like latter-day Sir George Frazers, (author of the Golden Bough) loftily theorising but actually not wanting to meet the natives. If they wish to dispell this aura of arrogance they should immediately fulfill their promise of applying their energy, resources and contacts to help find the 'Bristol Mutual Aid Centre' a new home. If not, although Dartington have many admirable projects, they are likely to lose the sympathy of the commoners they purport to be enlightening.



DARTINGTON FINE ART

Promises, Promises!

THE POLITICAL PARTIES are now beginning to limber up for next year's county council elections. And the first to produce an idea of what they want is the London Labour Party. In contrast to all the parties at the 1979 general election (none of whom gave transport more than the passing paragraph) this first offering sets out in detail the party's transport ideas.

An instant fares cut leading to free fares, more buses, more bus lanes, higher wages for London Transport staff and a halt to major road schemes are promised by the Labour Party if they win the 1981 Greater London Council elections.

In a manifesto paper which, for the first time, accepts that universal car ownership is not even a long term goal the Labour Party have set out their targets for a transport policy in London specifically aimed at supporting public transport. 'It is our view that public transport must take priority over the private use of cars'.

NEW!! *Three Mile Island Coffee Mugs*

Set includes 4 mugs and matching cream and sugar containment vessels

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Harrisburg, Pa.

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Street: _____
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Code: _____

Meet the Robot

THE HOME Office Minister, Leon Brittan, has flatly denied that his department has bought a computer capable of transcribing the human voice.

Let us examine the facts which are at Brittan's fingertips when he makes this flat denial.

— An American array processor manufacturer, Analogic, makes an add-on number-crunching device. It can be attached to the major mini-computers, giving them the mathematical power of

a Control Data Cyber, if not the data throughput.

— The Analogic array add-on costs upwards of £12,500—the cost of the cheapest model.

— The day Analogic announced the availability of this machine, it let it be known that one had already been ordered by (and possibly delivered to) a Government department, and that the contract was 'sensitive'.

— The next day, *The Guardian* printed a report saying that the Home Office had bought a £12,500 array processor, which could be used for voice processing.

— The Home Office has, indeed, bought the Analogic processor, and will indeed be using it for processing tape recordings of speech (my inside sources confirm).

— An array processor of this sort is eminently capable of being used as a 'digital vocoder'—processing various parts of the vocal spectrum such as excess sibilance, and reconstructing it in more intelligible form. This is known as cleaning up the tape.

— Nothing about all this says that the tapes are made by bugging phone calls, or that the cleaning up process is done as part of a transcribing process. However, the Home Office *does* bug phones, and when it does, it does write down the content of the conversations monitored.

I would now ask you to re-examine the statement made by Brittan, and to ask yourself whether it is a statement made to convey the truth, or a statement made to mislead on most points.

Brittan's statement was an answer to a Parliamentary question. While politicians feel privileged to make statements which are true only in the very marginal sense of not being totally false, it's not surprising that people feel cynical about them.

Baby Food

GENEVA: On 23 May a World Health Organisation Assembly resolution was passed on infant and young child feeding asking for infant food promotion to be curbed (see PNS 179). The resolution was passed despite the introduction of last-minute amendments by the United States, which had tried to dilute its strength.

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), an international organisation of non-governmental personnel, who have been monitoring the actions of the baby food companies to see if they have been complying



TO RAISE MONEY Cartwheel, a potential co-operative village, are pushing a cartwheel around Britain on a thousand mile route. They are asking people to sponsor them in their endeavours.

CARTWHEEL 'in action'

They can be contacted at **CARTWHEEL, 5 Fairlight Place, Brighton.**

with WHO resolutions, called on WHO to continue the development of an international code of marketing. 'The resolution supports the strong condemnation of aggressive promotional practices of the infant food industry expressed by most developing country delegations. Its adoption is the first step in the struggle to loosen industry's stranglehold on infant food feeding', said Andy Chetley, of IBFAN.

Copies of the report, and a complementary document *Proposals for Appropriate Control* can be obtained from War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE, tel: 609 0211.

—PNS

And now... future news

AS A DEPARTURE from the norm, Undies is embarking on news of the future. In a recent publication by Pendulum, Francis Kinsman has gathered together some predictions for the end of the century, by various psychics, mediums, astrologers etc. Among some of the most interesting predictions are that this country is headed for total economic collapse by autumn '82, preceded by inflation of hurricane proportions beginning in Sept '81.

The peak period for this economic upheaval seems to be around 1984, after which our society, we are told, will regener-

ate. There are predictions that co-operatives as a viable alternative, will come to the fore in the 90s. However there is a warning note that if those in control of the leading nations do not take note of the will of the masses, there could be worse upheavals to come in the 90s with the threat of war. The general opinion is that Europe will not actually be involved in a nuclear war, however a war between Russia and China is possible, and also a short sharp war in the Middle East. Personally I find one of the most hopeful predictions is about the demise of the 'patriarchal systems' and a return to a 'female' caring society.

SNOOP

THE 462 MEMBERS of the Government's special fraud investigations unit (social security snoopers), have claimed £1 million in expenses over the last year. In a reply to a Parliamentary question in mid-April, Reg Prentice, Social Services Minister, disclosed that an average of £2,165 per year, or £40 per week, was claimed by each snooper on top of his/her wages. The £1 million is what the specialist officers spend on 'travel, subsistence and other expenses'. Expenses run from £1.25 for an absence of between five and ten hours and £18.30 for an 'overnight stay away from home'. Two snoopers have been transferred from investigation duties because of fiddling their expense claims between 1975 and 1979. Neither was prosecuted.

PNS/Labour Weekly

Black Hills Gathering

THE 1980'S MAY be the most crucial decade in this century. The decay of our lands and lives is reaching a critical stage. Many people realise that the freedom to control one's own life is violated by corporate encroachment, that our future is being colonised. But little, if anything, is being done about it.

The International Survival Gathering is one effort to overcome the feelings of helplessness. This summer, thousands of participants will gather on land next to one of the largest nuclear Air Force Bases in the USA. They will be self-sufficient in food and shelter. The preparations for the historic Gathering are linking together diverse concerns for a common cause: the survival of future generations.

The purpose of the Gathering is to present and organise sane, viable alternatives to decentralise modern society. Workshops will be held on education and health. Three major simultaneous events will be presented:

- 1) A Citizen's Review Commission on the Energy Developing Corporations;
- 2) An Appropriate Technology/Land Self-Sufficiency Project;
- 3) A Forum on Indian Genocide and the Planned Extinction of the Family Farm.

It is essential that people from overseas be included in strategising for survival. In the words of Tantanka Iyotake (Sitting Bull) of the Lakota Nation: 'Let us put our minds together and see what life we will make for our children'.

THE ENERGY WAR ON INDIAN LANDS

A Message from the Black Hills Alliance

In 1978, the President of the United States called for the mobilisation of an entire nation to defend the collapsing centralised energy society. The message of his 'Energy War' was simple: a country in disfavour abroad must prepare to bring resource exploitation home.

The first called upon to 'sacrifice' are the Native People, for under their Nations lie over two-thirds of the uranium and one-third of the low-sulfur coal

claimed by the US. The second to sacrifice will be the American people of the Northern Plains. There, 27 corporations are attempting to mine and 'develop' the region dominated by the Black Hills of South Dakota. The magnificent Hills are the home of Mount Rushmore, 'Shrine of Democracy'. The region is slated to become a 'National Sacrifice Area'.

The companies and government reveal frankly that their intentions will result in the desertification and contamination of a vast territory. The area targeted is western South Dakota, SW North Dakota, SE Montana, and NE Wyoming. Plans for 'Midwestern Industrialisation' include:

- The exploration of over one million acres for an estimated 8 million tons of uranium ore;
- Colossal stripmines for coal, and iron ore;
- Numerous coal-fired plants (13 of 10,000 megawatts in the 1980's) often burning coal mixed with uranium;
- Uranium mills and the possibility of nuclear reactors;
- A coal/water pipeline system, countless powerlines, and radioactive uranium tailings dumps;
- In-migration of half-a-million people;
- Government predictions of the 'disappearance or loss of tribal cultural heritage/values' of the Lakota (Sioux) people;
- A Senate bill giving the Energy Department full military powers.

The 'Energy Rush' in the Northern Plains is similar to that on Indian lands in the Southwest. There, 6000 Navajos are being removed from their ancestral home to make way for a coal stripmine. In addition, a government report has proposed to 'zone the land into uranium mining and milling districts so as

to forbid human habitation'. 28 Navajo uranium miners have already died from the effects of cancerous radon gas.

The key to the energy development plans is WATER, the most precious resource in the West. The mining, milling, and transport processes will use gargantuan amounts of water. Corporate claims on the Missouri River already almost exceed the quantity of water it contains, following through on these claims would lead to the demise of one of the world's great rivers. Other bodies would be contaminated by radioactivity, heavy metals, or acid rainfalls. But it is the underground water bodies that give life to the region. Corporate reports anticipate one of the shallow tables will be pumped dry within 35 years. Massive air pollution from coal plants could shift the weather patterns in the affected region. One foreseen result of these factors combining is a Second Dust Bowl, with no chance of recovery for 20 to 30,000 years. This is apparently the definition of the word 'sacrifice'.

THE ENERGY RUSH

Plans for industrialisation of the Black Hills country are coming up against those who love the land and gain their livelihood from it. In February 1973, traditional Lakotas called on the American Indian Movement (AIM) for help. The coalition confronted the colonial system in the village of Wounded Knee, site of the 1890 massacre. Subsequently surrounded by FBI and BIA armour, the people decided to make a stand for their human and sovereign rights.



The colonial authority on reservations is the US Bureau of Indian Affairs. The BIA developed and controls the Tribal Councils, which conflict with the traditional and legal governments of the Native Nations. On Pine Ridge reservation, one such Tribal Council seriously cracked down on democratic rights in the early 1970s. Beatings were frequent, and the BIA set up machine guns in response to peaceful demonstrations by women and children.

For 72 days, the Pentagon directed a paramilitary campaign against the people in Wounded Knee. Armoured Personnel Carriers, helicopters, Phantom jets, and federal agents in combat gear were deployed in accordance with counterinsurgent policy. Two Indians were killed, and a second Wounded Knee massacre was averted by only 48 hours.

It was after Wounded Knee when the federal 'Reign of Terror' started. Dozens of traditional and activist figures were found dead in the course of a few years. The controversial shooting deaths of Pedro Bissonette, Anna Mae Aquash, and others were viewed alongside the numerous arrests on questionable charges. The US Commission on Civil Rights concluded that 'the FBI is conducting a full-scale military operation on the reservation'. The FBI termed itself a 'colonial police force'. The media largely turned away from the conflict.

On June 26, 1975, 200 FBI agents again besieged the reservation. The resulting friction escalated into a battle at a traditional camp that left an Indian man and two agents dead.

No one was ever brought to trial for the death of the Indian man, but four AIM members were charged with the FBI deaths. Charges against one were dropped, and two were acquitted on grounds of self-defence. The trial of the fourth man arrested, Leonard Peltier, was followed closely by Amnesty International. It reported that two prosecution witnesses reversed their testimony, claiming they had been threatened by the FBI. The original evidence of one was termed by even the prosecutor as 'totally unbelievable'. Peltier was convicted nevertheless, and is currently interned in a Behaviour Modification 'control unit' in an Illinois prison. A federal judge has admitted the facility uses drugs and psychiatric methods to 'silence economic and philosophical dissidents'. No wonder that South Dakota residents are now asking themselves the question 'just what exactly is an 'Energy War'?'.

The local people asking this question come from many walks of life. In 1979, The Black Hills Alliance was founded by Indians and Americans concerned with the environment and agriculture. For different races to join in a common cause is new in the history of the Plains. In the words of AIM activist Ted Means, 'In ten years time, there won't be anything left for us to fight over'.

For information write to: **BLACK HILLS ALLIANCE, P.O. BOX 2508, RAPID CITY, SD 57009 USA.**

Crisis in Advice

NOW THAT the Tories have done their best to evoke our hard won rights the news is that they are going about cutting our ability to fight back. The 1,500 advice centres around the country which provide an essential service in informing people of their rights as tenants, employees, consumers and claimants are threatened with closure.

Already the Department of Rade has announced that central government funding of consumer advice centres is to stop entirely at the end of the current financial year. As many as half the 126 consumer advice centres may have to close as a result. Cuts in local authority spending are putting at risk many local advice agencies, particularly neighbourhood advice centres. Central government cuts also threaten centres dependent on the Manpower Services Commission and Urban Aid.

A national Advice Centres in Crisis Working Party has been formed to link together the different threatened groups. It is based at the National Consumer Council offices, and its other members are the Association of Housing Aid, Federation of Independent Advice Centres, Institute of Consumer Advisers, Law Centres Federation, National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, and the National Association of Young People's Counselling and Advisory Services.

The Working Party has been set up to lobby the Government in defence of advice centres, and to give help and publicity for local campaigns to keep centres open. They have produced a useful guide to local lobbying, and background information to show the importance of the advice service as a vital (and comparatively cheap—public service—which was used by 5½ million people in 1978.

Advice Centres in Crisis Working Party: c/o 18 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1. 222 9501.

IN THE AFTERMATH of Three Mile Island there has been a dramatic decline in enrollment in nuclear engineering courses—as much as 20% at larger colleges according to the American Nuclear Society. Master's degrees are down 25% from last year and many educators reportedly feel that the trend away from nuclear engineering is just beginning.
—Zodiac News Service



Now that London Transport has collapsed Undercurrents workers come to work by horse



Green light to Project Greentown

THE GREENTOWN PROJECT, which aims to establish an experimental, co-operative eco-community in Milton Keynes (see UC 35) has now received the Green Light from Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC).

MKDC has made an offer in principle to the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) of a 25 acre site for an initial pilot scheme located in the

Crownhill area, just off the A5 on the western flank of Milton Keynes. The next step is for the TCPA, working in conjunction with the Greentown Group in Milton Keynes, to prepare more detailed proposals for both the initial development of the 25 acre site and its eventual expansion to about 500 acres.

Meanwhile, the TCPA has received a £19,000 grant from the Rowntree Trust, both for research and to help promote the establishment of 'Greentowns' in Milton Keynes and elsewhere in Britain, along the lines outlined in the Association's 'Prospectus for a Third Garden City', published in 1979.

Apart from Milton Keynes' offer of land, perhaps the most encouraging of the various other responses to the *Prospectus* has been from Telford Development Corporation, in Shropshire, which is apparently willing to offer 100 acres for a similar experimental community.

The Greentown Group will be holding a week-long conference at Datington in Devon during the last week of August. Further details from the Greentown Group, 109 Church Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes.

WASHINGTON: The committee studying long-range nuclear weapons needs has recommended the building of a reactor to provide nuclear material for warheads. It would cost \$3 billion and would be the first reactor built for the weapons programme in the US in the last 25 years. (WISE)

SUPER BUREAUCRACY HITS WATERWAYS

THE SUPER-BUREAUCRATS at the EEC have made a proposal for 'Harmonisation of certain social provisions relating to goods transport by inland waterway'.

The plan of the grey men from Brussels is to insist that there must be three men per barge on inland waterways, a plan that has not only been vigorously opposed by Trades Unions and the British Waterways Board, but would 'kill small-scale canal transportation' as Chris Leah from the Co-operative Canal Carriers says. The proposals would effectively mean all waterborne wholefood transport would have to stop. Chris suggests writing to MPs, Eurocrats, etc. to voice disapproval of this particularly inane piece of bureaucratic folly.

Steelyard Blues

IAN MACGREGOR, the Scots-born American merchant banker appointed recently to head the British Steel Corporation, is US co-chairman of the British North America Committee.

BNAC is a transatlantic group of bankers which has close links with key organizations of the Tory right such as the Institute for the Study of Conflict and the Freedom Association. MacGregor is also a director of Amax, a

company that owns mines in Namibia. Membership of BNAC includes Chase Manhattan Bank, Occidental Petroleum, Rio Tinto Zinc and a handful of trades unionists. BNAC's sponsoring organization in the US is the National Planning Association, which, according to an official publication exists 'To strengthen private initiative and enterprise... NPA believes that through private planning we can avoid a

planned economy'. BNAC was the organisation that Peter Bessell used as cover to 'run messages' between American Intelligence and the South Vietnamese, as documented in *The Pencourt File*. Sir Keith Joseph has said in the House of Commons about MacGregor; 'He is an example of a type of which I wish we had more in this country'. But with his close connections with those completely opposed to State intervention in the economy, he seems a strange choice, to say the least, to run a nationalised industry.

Information: State Research

The Labour Party's ANTI CRUISE MISSILE rally at Hyde Park on the 22nd of June drew crowds of protesters in the torrential rain. The estimates varied between 11,000 up to 25,000 for the numbers of staunch activists present.

Miners' leader Lawrence Daly reminded the crowd of the Labour Party's commitment to nuclear disarmament. MPs Robin Cook and Jo Richardson, actress Susannah York and old reliables Fenner Brockway and Michael Foot urged the soaking multitude to carry on what is gradually becoming a powerful international campaign. There were some anarchist interventions from the front of the platform, brass bands before the march, folk singers afterwards and no visible trouble from the police. The familiar CND symbol fluttered on many of the banners a few 'Tony Benn for No 10' T-shirts were sported, if that's the right word, and a general feeling that after years of hibernation the movement is once again girding up its loins in an attempt to stop Britain from becoming an 'unsinkable aircraft carrier' for American nuclear weaponry controlled by military personnel who have 'forgotten that there are no winners in a nuclear war'.

Duncan Campbell



PHOTO TESSA HOWLAND (I.F.L.) 'REPORT'

AT 2000

A GROUP of 30 scientists, mainly from Brittany, have published a plan to cover Brittany's energy consumption in the year 2000 without using oil and nuclear power. The 'alternative energy plan for Brittany' is based on decentralisation and the use of energy sources which could be applied in Brittany on the basis of existing techniques.

The plan e.g. projects for an increased use of the sea for energy production. It encompasses tidal ebb and flow, very powerful in some places along the coast of Brittany. This energy is already used in a power station near St. Malo; the alternative plan proposes 10 more such power stations along the coast. Another method would be collecting algae from the sea to be transformed into biogas. The alternative plan further lists the construction of 2000 wind generators the size of the one operating at Tvind/Denmark to be installed in those areas where conditions are most favourable. A further 10,000 smaller generators (5 kw) should be applied to cover domestic electricity consumption. Sun power in connection with heat-pumps should cover part of the energy needed for heating purposes.

With the alternative plan the scientists hope to constructively respond to the recurring oil tanker catastrophes on the coast of Brittany and the mounting conflict that arose around Plogoff where the French government plans to construct a large nuclear power station. At the moment the 'alternative plan' is widely discussed throughout the ecological movement in Brittany.

Contact: Paul Treguer, 11 rue Durér, 29200 Brest, France. Amis de la Terre de Rennes. 73 Av. de Chateaugiron, Rennes.

Dutch reactor operating illegally

THE NETHERLANDS: Recently it was revealed that the 50 MWe reactor at Doodewaard was operating illegally because there was more fuel stored there than the permit allowed for. However, when the group 'Stop Doodewaard' demanded immediate shutdown, the Minister of Economics decided, without consulting either parliament or the population, to change the permit so that the plant would no longer be operating illegally. If an accident should occur now at Doodewaard, it would not be possible to take all the fuelrods out of the reactor, because there would be no place to put them. Contact: Loes Orsel, St. Antoniuspl. 14, Nijmegen, Holland. tel: 80-230252.

EROTIK

UNDERCURRENTS had a stall at the 5th festival of Mind-Body-Spirit at Olympia, dubbed 'the festival of wind and money'. Not all was perfect harmony; I heard at least one New Age put down along the lines of 'If your third eye is properly opened you can pick some really bad energies at their stall...' tsk, tsk... E.A. ST GEORGE, a magician from SPOOK ENTERPRISES was telling how she stopped the Harrisburg reactor going up with her 'Atomic Reactor Incense' (a snip at £1.00). Also of interest, their UFO incense 'for those who wish to contact alien beings' and M.I.5 incense 'created for those who deal with matters of Intelligence'. Must send some to Duncan CAMPBELL at the NEW STATESMAN.

Kit PEDLER was lecturing on the 'New Science', a mixture of occult and ecology. 'What a pity paranormal sounds like a disease' quoth Kit, who also informed us that Niels BOHR, the atomic physicist, had a yin-yang symbol on his notepaper in 1927 (eat your heart out, Fritzjof CAPRA). Watch out for the series on Thames T.V., the book, the film of the book, the matching table mats, etc. The U.K. Atomic Energy Authority still have no plans to use the I Ching to site their next reactors...

One of the PEDLER mafia (his cousin) was sounding off at a WILDWOOD house party to launch a book called 'The Technology of Man'. 'If I was dictator, I would allow only one child families' he raved wildly until Tom MARGERISON pointed out 'you are not a dictator, and if you were I would shoot you'. MARGERISON, founder of the NEW SCIENTIST, suggested UNDERCURRENTS should go monthly, but for some reason seemed less enthusiastic at a request to borrow his bank account. Only for a few weeks, Tom...

Forthcoming from WILDWOOD, now being helped out by a sympathetic Sufi businessman, includes a book from Richard

'Inner Technology' ELEN and one that John MICHELL among others has been plugging by Andy DUNN. The book in question 'Arcana Of The Big Smoke' is either the work of a madman or a genius (or possibly both)...

I hear that David LEBLANC went all the way to Acapulco to cover Ken DODD's concert there, which was cancelled at the last minute. Inspiration for his 'alternative biography' was no doubt had in examining the interesting plant and weed life around Acapulco...

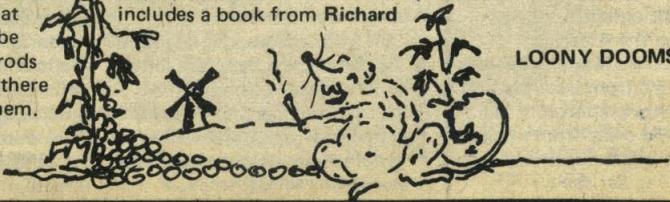
At the ICA Professor JUNGK and a UKAEA spokesman were quoting experts to each other. I was reminded of Charles FORT's comment 'For every expert there is an equal and opposite expert'. But as long as quite a few think Nukes are disastrous, I'm prepared to borrow their arguments to help stop the Nuclear Energy programme's expansion...

On a recent leaflet from RESURGENCE, there was a space for putting the amount for contribution towards the editors trip to the United States. Donations should be marked the 'Keep Satish KUMAR out of the Workhouse Fund' and addressed to Ford House, Hartland, Devon. I myself urgently need funds towards an important piece of research on 'Ley-lines and the Beaches of the Southern Mediterranean'. All cheques gratefully received...

I would have been about to tell you about FINDHORN's talk and summer solstice celebration in Highgate, but unfortunately giant guerrilla vegetables at the door prevented my attending...

The only good reason for nuclear war, that of ridding the nation of Simon BATES, Tony BLACKBURN and their ilk from RADIO 1, has now disappeared. According to a Government paper in the event of nuclear war, the war-time Radio service will broadcast entertainment and music 'to keep morale up'... Great, just great... Aufwiedersehen...

LOONY DOOMSTER



what's what

The **CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY FREE PRESS** is a collective printing and silkscreen group who do work for voluntary and community groups (at cost price if the groups have no money). At the moment the collective consists of 2 women and 3 men, but they are looking for another worker, preferably female, to join them. Experience is not necessary. They can't pay wages yet, but hope to be able to do so in the near future. Those interested should contact CCFP, The Bath House, Gwydir St., Cambridge (tel: Cambridge 312800).

Some enterprising people have produced a number of anti-smoking badges, with interesting slogans such as 'No Smoking Please—Breathing in Progress' and 'Smoking Gets Right up my Nose', amongst others. They cost 20p each, with reductions on larger orders, and they are available from: Sabrina Worvill, 2 East St., Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon.

ATOMIC TIMES is a monthly digest of nuclear news derived from newspapers and journals, with each issue containing over 100 news items. Each news piece is itemised and summarised, so it is a useful source of what is happening in the nuclear world. They welcome people to send in items from local newspapers that they may not be able to cover. A sample issue costs 20p, with a subscription (10 issues) costing £2.50 (claimants £1.50). It is available from Lancaster Half-Life, who produce it, at 120 Main St., Warton, nr. Camforth, Lancs.

An **ORGANIC GROWERS ASSOCIATION (OGA)** has recently been formed, as a result of the successful National Conference of Organic Growers last January (UC 39). It aims to give growers technical advice, by publishing growing guides and organising conferences; to help with marketing, by using a symbol denoting organic quality on packaging; and to set up a 40 acre commercial farm that the OGA have been given. The OGA is open to all growers (organic or otherwise) and anyone else who is interested. Details from: OGA Secretary, Aeron Parle, Llangeitho, Dyfed.

WOMENS AID have produced a series of colourful, easy to understand posters which outline clearly the different legal steps available to battered women in England and Wales. There are 4 posters, each covering one topic (violence, housing, children or money) and showing the advantages and disadvantages of the various remedies available. They are designed as a set and would be invaluable to both battered women and people who work with them. The set costs £1.50, inc. p&p, and is available from Wallchart, N.W.A.F., 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

LONDON PEACE ACTION wants to produce a newsletter which will inform people about other peace groups, what they are doing and what help, if any, they need. It could also be used to express views, and would also provide contact addresses. They are willing to initiate it, but they want other groups to take turns in producing it as they don't want it to be 'their' newsletter.

Contact: London Peace Action, c/o 6 Endsleigh St., London WC1.

Recently several groups have been producing anti-nuke posters.

These groups include:

HACKNEY ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP—poster on nuclear waste spillages. Black and red on white. Available for 50p each (30p for 10 or more) from: HANG, c/o Sunpower, 83 Blackstock Rd., London N4.

NORTH LONDON ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP—poster designed to appear in areas through which nuclear waste travels. Black and white, price 5 for 60p inc. p&p, from NLANG, c/o Flat 1, 83 Priory Rd, London N8.

PADDINGTON PRINT SHOP—general anti-nuke poster, 'It's Childs Play'. Two-colour posters cost £5 for 10, 5-colour ones (wow!) cost 80p each or £6.50 for 10. Available from Jay Talbot, Paddington Print Shop, 1 Elgin Avenue, London W9.

George Firsoff is hoping to publish his book "1968 Spring of Youth" by subscription of £3. Anybody interested in this wide-ranging project should contact George at 80 Kingsdown Parade, Bristol 6. Telephone (0272) 425872.

'**SETTING UP A TREE NURSERY**' is a duplicated pamphlet produced for the World Forest Campaign. It contains a lot of general information about soils, etc. as well as tree-planting. Available for 35p from: World Forest Campaign (Secretary), Forest Cottage, Trelleck Rd, Tintern, Chepstow, Gwent.

COMMONWORK CENTRE people are developing a training programme to develop strategies for peaceful energy. The programme seems essentially to involve setting up consciousness raising groups on alternative energy—to equip people with technical skills and information, and to clarify visions of the future. Send an s.a.e. for a copy of the programme to: Jennifer Wates, Commonwork Centre, Bore Place, Bough Beech, Edenbridge, Kent.

FIRST OF MAY, Edinburgh's radical bookshop-cum-meeting place, has moved to bigger, easier to find premises. Their new address is: 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh 1.

Disabled people, or those working with them, may be interested in a paper produced by **SHARE** community entitled 'Co-operatives for Disabled People'. It is aimed at both unemployed disabled people and those who are potentially disabled because they work in high-risk situations such as mines or building sites. The paper is available from Share at: 170 Kingston Rd., London SW19.

WOMENERGY is the name of a new newsletter which is being produced about (yes, you've guessed it) women and nuclear power. The first few issues will be produced from London, so send your contributions (or subscriptions of £1) to: Womenergy, 24 Rancliffe Road., London E6.



The current issue of **ISIS**, the international women's bulletin, is a special issue on nuclear power and militarization, and how these affect women. It is available for £1 + 16½p postage from Miranda Davies, 35 St. Lukes Mews, London W11.

'**CIVIL DEFENCE**' is the title of a new booklet written by Philip Bolsover for CND. Subtitled 'The Cruellest Confidence Trick' it describes the effects that a nuclear bomb would have on an area, and shows how ludicrous the Government's ideas on how we should protect ourselves really are. Highly recommended. It is available for 40p from CND, 29 Gt James St., London WC1.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH BIRMINGHAM continue to publish prolifically. Hot on the heels of 'The Nuclear File' (reviewed in UC 40) comes 'The Nuclear Power Sourcebook' and 'Keeping Britain Warm'. The former is an annotated bibliography of nearly all the literature published about nuclear power and alternative energy. 'Keeping Britain Warm' is about thermal insulation in new houses. Both are available from FOE B'ham, 54-57 Allison St., Birmingham 5.

A community-based **ENERGY STUDIES GROUP** is being set up in the Bracknell/Reading area. The aims are to forge links between those with technical knowledge and the community at large. In particular it is hoped to develop an awareness of the social, political and economic aspects of energy choice. For more details contact: Energy Studies Group, The Old Coach House, Binfield Court, Binfield, Berks.

SMALL ALTERNATIVES is a booklet containing loads of ideas on how to live ecologically—how to reduce water usage, save energy, garden organically, travel economically, make your own entertainment, etc. Available for 30p from Patrick Howden, 'Clovally', Menagissey, Mount Hawke, Truro, Cornwall.

AT buffs may be interested in the triennial report of the Open University's **ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY GROUP**.

Research into food from small-holdings, recycling, alternative transport and energy are all happening at the OU, and this booklet describes the projects in some detail. The booklet is available from: Alternative Technology, Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

Inventive Structures of Hackney is currently producing a light-weight shopping trailer which can be hitched to a bike or easily wheeled around the shops. The trailer, complete with a large canvas bag, is available for £30 from Richard Lanham, 7 Parkholme Road, London E8.

what's when

Longo Mai and the European Cultural Commission have organised an 8-week series of discussions on various themes related to a European identity. Each theme lasts a week. Those that are still left are:—

21-27 July: Ecological Commission. Ravaging our environment. Water Pollution.

28 July-3 August: Social Commission. Unemployment, alternative ways of living, and more.

4-10 August: Cultural Commission. Including Americanisation, the role of the media.

11-17 August: 'Our Identity'. What traditions should be redefined, eg. Workers' movements, to counter the loss of a European identity.

18-24 August: 'Europe and the rest of the world'. Relationships with the Third World. Independent development.

The last week of August will be devoted to a summary and recapitulation of the main concrete objectives arising from the previous weeks.

To enroll, send £5 to: Co-operative Europeene Longo Mai: Repart Berlui Perussis, 04300 Forcalquier (nr. Provence), France. There may be a group going from England. For more information contact: Brigit Wright, 12 Lytton Rd, Leicester (tel: Leicester 704229).

CAMPAIGN ATOM are holding a vigil against the Cruise missile at Greenham Common USAF base, Newbury Berks, from **August 6** (Hiroshima Day) to the **9th** (Nagasaki Day). Details from Tony (tel: Oxford 724315) or Dick (Oxford 54701).

On **August 30** the people who wrote **BEYOND THE FRAGMENTS** (reviewed in *UC 39*) and others who came together after the book plan a conference in Leeds to bring together the fragments themselves. Discussion will be organised in workshops covering a range of areas: film, theatre, cultural politics, new technology, housing, the welfare state, the press, etc. The aim, it seems, is to 'start a movement'. Details from 39 Kelvin Grove, Liverpool 8.

Northern people may be interested in a conference and exhibition entitled **APPROPRIATE ENERGY FOR TYNESIDE**. The conference, on **20 September**, aims to make grass roots and community organisations more aware of the social, political and environmental advantages of appropriate energy technology. They hope that initiatives will emerge in the campaign for alternative energy in Tyneside communities, and full, socially useful employment in Tyneside industries. Guest speaker will be our own Dave Elliott. Details from: Newcastle Inner City Forum, MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle NE1.

THE NURTONS FIELD CENTRE will be holding a course entitled 'How to Start & Run a Small Farm', taken by Patrick Rivers, from **September 17-19**. This course is intended for those contemplating a move and those who have just moved and have intentions of producing their own food. The weekend will cover economic, organisational and emotional needs. Further details and booking to: The Nurtons, Tintern, nr Chepstow, Gwent.



The **WHOLEFOOD FAIR** will be held at the Campus West Exhibition Centre, Welwyn Garden City, Herts on **26-27 September**. The fair will involve nearly every organisation in Britain engaged in organic growing, and will also stress the benefits of whole foods as distinct from foods with additives, improvers, preservatives and colourings. Admission is a mere 50p.

NORWICH FRIENDS OF THE EARTH will be cycling around Norfolk and north-east Suffolk for two weeks, starting from **August 2**, on a cycle roadshow. This is a pedal-powered tour which involves camping at night and giving two performances a day of street theatre, music, singing, dancing, leafletting and publicity for FOE. Anyone able to assemble a bicycle, tandem or trike loaded with tent, sleeping bag, etc. is welcome to join all or part of the two weeks. More details from: Norwich FOE, Charing Cross Centre, St. John Maddermarket, Norwich (tel: Norwich 610993).

Anyone who feels like a jaunt to Ireland in August might like to visit the **3rd ANTI-NUCLEAR POWER SHOW** at Carnsore Point, Co. Wexford. The festival will be from **11-16 August**, and will include exhibitions, workshops, etc. with an emphasis on uranium mining and waste dumping off the Irish coast.

Cheltenham is coming alive with **Think 80—CHELTENHAM'S FESTIVAL FOR CREATIVE THINKING AND LIVING**. Topics covered at the festival include alternative technology, ecology, conservation, cottage industries, healing, animal welfare, astrology and a lot more. The festival takes place on **30/31 August**. For more details send an s.a.e. to: The Secretary, Think 80, P.O. 88, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

The **NATIONAL EXTENSION COLLEGE** are starting a multimedia project called **Village Action**. The idea is to suggest and initiate positive ways for villages to solve their own problems—be they transport, education, housing, employment, health or others. The project consists of a kit on ways of taking communal action over these problems, and a series of 6 television programmes broadcast nationally. The kit will be published on September 1. Further details can be obtained from John Mead, National Extension College, 18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge.

Another **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE** is taking place again this year from **29-31 August**. The venue is Beechwood Hall, Leeds (also site of the Co-ops Fair). For further information contact: Friends World College, Studio 441, O&N Warehouse, Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London E1.

The **FABIAN SOCIETY** are organising a week's summer school in Gloucestershire on 'Energy Planning in a Democracy'. Speakers include *UC's* own Pat Coyne. Anyone interested in socialism, the environment, energy, planning, and a good holiday is welcome to attend. A creche will be available. The cost of the week is a rather exorbitant £76 inclusive (children half-price). If interested, contact the Fabian Society as soon as possible at: 11 Dartmouth St., London SW1, tel: (01) 222 8877.

South West London College is going to run another **ENTERPRISE TRAINING PROGRAMME** in the autumn. The course is aimed at people from housing co-ops, employment co-ops, etc. who want to develop skills in managing money, marketing, personnel, feasibility studies for new products, etc. (yuk!). The course fee is £50, which is very reasonable considering you get ten one-day workshops, 2 residential sessions of a week and a weekend, a course design day and individual tutorials. The course will run until March. Further details from: Ced Jackson, London Community Work Service, 68 Chalton St., London NW1.



LOWER SHAW FARM have two workshops left in their summer programme of events. There is a craft camp from **10-16 August**, and a week of 'sustainable lifestyles' from **24-30 August**. For details send an s.a.e. to Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, or phone (0793) 771080.

The **ECOLOGY PARTY SUMMER GATHERING (August 7-10)** sounds fun. There will be speakers on eco-political issues and alternatives, and there will also be discussion workshops, theatre, alternative stalls, children's playspace and more. Admission is only £4 (children free) and this includes evening entertainment as well. Bring your own tent to: Worthy Farm, Pilton, nr Glastonbury, Somerset.

What Are Co-ops For?

THIS CO-OP FAIR Special Number of Undercurrents is devoted to the problems and opportunities that face the fast-growing co-op movement: there are now some 330 enterprises in Britain and Ireland owned solely by the people who work in them, a tenfold increase in ten years; the scale of the revival matches the heyday of co-operation in the last century.

WHO are these co-ops and what do they make? On the next page we have mapped and listed them by town and trade; most are in markets that are easy to enter without much capital: jobbing building, small retailing, printing, crafts, cafes, entertainment, etc. However as you run your eye down the list you will see a sprinkling of more unusual goods and services: windmills, dungarees, boots, bicycle menders, electronics, computer software, chemicals and castings.

WHAT is it like working in a co-op? Workers from Suma (wholefoods), Northumbrian Energy Workshop (windmills), Computercraft, Ragged Robin (Clothes), Delta-T (electronics), Interplay (theatre) tell their own stories and Tess MacMahon reflects on her experience in a number of groups that have tried to put democracy into practice by working collectively. Freer Spreckley and some other comradely critics point out the pitfalls of inefficiency and tunnel vision that lie in the path of overenthusiastic new co-operators.

WHAT about the big bad world outside the cozy co-op enclave? John Southgate and Daniel Ellsberg point out the dangers of famine and war that beset us and argue, like Ben Franklin two hundred years ago, that if we don't learn to hang together, we will assuredly soon hang separately. And our team of ace cartoonists give us three

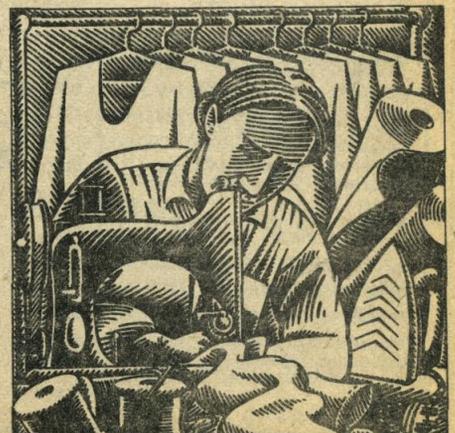
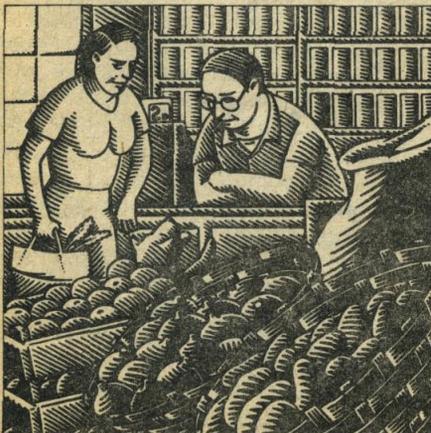
alternative visions of the future Co-operative Commonwealth: which one would you choose?

IF co-ops are merely the 'acceptable face of socialism' as a Russian comrade argues, why are so many capitalist politicians, pundits and industrialists, none of them noted for their altruism, so keen on co-ops? Where's the catch? David Belden dissects their purple prose and lays bare the hidden motives for their sudden conversion. If we are not to be co-opted by the rich and powerful, he argues, we must develop a strong voice of our own.

THIS year's Fair was organised by an informal and ad hoc group who felt the need for a forum where co-operators could meet to discuss in a convivial but serious fashion where we go from here. We have been encouraged by the way the initial response of blank indifference has changed to one of interest and even enthusiasm; we hope that the Fair may become an annual event, useful both socially and politically.

TO quote one of our Features Editors (late at night over a hot typewriter): "Let us walk shoulder to shoulder out of the gloomy valley of late capitalism onto the broad sunlit uplands of the new co-operative dawn where we see on the horizon the sparkling windmills of the new age which if we stick together shoulders to the wheel through thick and thin backs to the wall at the end of the day it may be our sacred privilege to usher in... etc.. etc.." (the rest of this uplifting essay has been deleted by order of the Undercurrents editorial collective).

ACCESS: The Co-op Fair Organising Group (COFOG), Beechwood Centre, Elmete Lane, Roundhay, Leeds 8, West Yorkshire. Tel: (0532) 720205. The fair will be/is/was at Beechwood on July 19 and 20.



Where They Are

BRITISH AND IRISH CO-OPS

FIRST comes the town, or county. Then come co-ops currently registered with ICOM, first how many there are, then what they do. Next, in italic, come the number and functions of a further group of co-ops culled from *In the Making* and a list provided by the CDA (these may be a little out of date). Inevitably some have got left out, while a few that are in may now be defunct. There are 206 ICOM co-ops and 118 others on this list. Commas separate co-ops; + signs show several functions in one co-op.

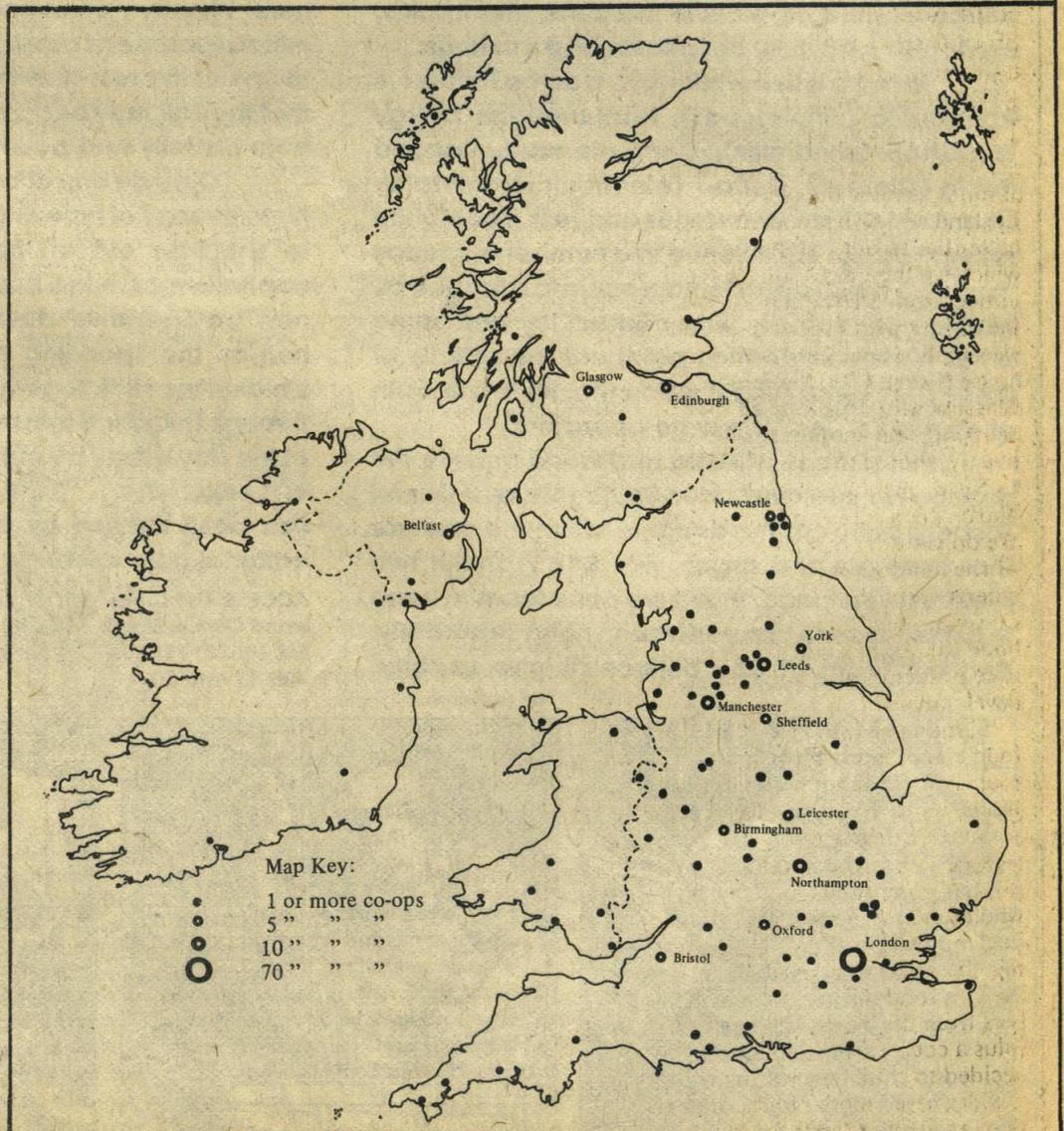
CODE

bk	bookshop	pr	printing
bld	building	publ	publishing
ca	cafe	tht	theatre
cr	crafts	w	wholefoods

- Aberdeen: 4: ca, bk, pr + publ, w
- Anglesey: 1: farm commune
- Argyll: 1: Communications experts
- Arran: 1: handspinning
- Aylesbury: 1: w
- Ballymena: 1: poultry
- Ballymurny: 1: knitwear
- Belfast: 6: bk, cr, pr, w, garage, fine arts
- Bingley: W. Yorks: 1: w
- Birmingham: 4: bk, bld, w, clothing.
1: FOE warehouse (recycling)
- Bournemouth: 1: w
- Bradford: 1: bk 1: w
- Braintree: 1: w
- Brighton: 2: w + bakery, restaurant
1: studios
- Bristol: 5: ca + bk, 2 bld, w, carpentry
3: bk, film makers, musicians
- Burnley: 1: commune + bld
- Cambridge: 3: w, electronics + commune,
academic journal
- Cardiff: 2: Pr, bk 2: 2 bld
- Carmarthen: 1: farm
- Carrickmacross: 1: shoes
- Caversham: 1: closure seals
- Cirencester: 1: crafts
- Colchester: 1: pr
- Co. Cork: 1: water treatment
- Coventry: 2: bld, bk + food 2: w,
motorcycles
- Croydon: 1: w + ca
- Cumbria: 1: castings + engineering
- Darlington: 1: w
- Denbigh: 1: textiles
- Derby: 1: pr
- Donegal: 2: knitters, fishers
- Dorset: 1: theatre
- Dublin: 1: cafes 1: graphic arts
- Dumfries: 1: w
- Dundalk: 1: springs
- Dundee: 1: bk
- Durham: 2: w, bk + fruit & veg
2: farm, Earthcare Co-op
- Edinburgh: 4: bk, bicycle magazine,
bicycles, free school 2: 2 bk
- Essex: 1: holiday tour organisers
- Exeter: 1: language + other education
- Glasgow: 5: Pr, 4 w 2: pr, w
- Hampshire: 1: agriculture
- Hebden Bridge: 3: w, bk distribution,
"project" 1: restaurant
- Helston: 1: crafts
- Hemel Hempstead: 1: artists + cr
- Herts: 1: bld + seminars etc
- Hexham: 1: windmills etc
- High Bentham, Lancs: 1: ca + cr
- Huddersfield: 2: bk + food, commune
+ cr + pr
- Huntingdon: 1: mobile site units mfr &
hire
- Inverness: 2: w, publ + broadcasting etc
- Isle of Harris: 1: knitwear
- Kirkcubrightshire: 1: commune + bld etc
- Lampeter: 1: clothing
- Lanarkshire: 1: Bardree Co. Ltd
- Lancaster: 1: bk + ca + w 1: community
Project
- Leamington: 1: bk

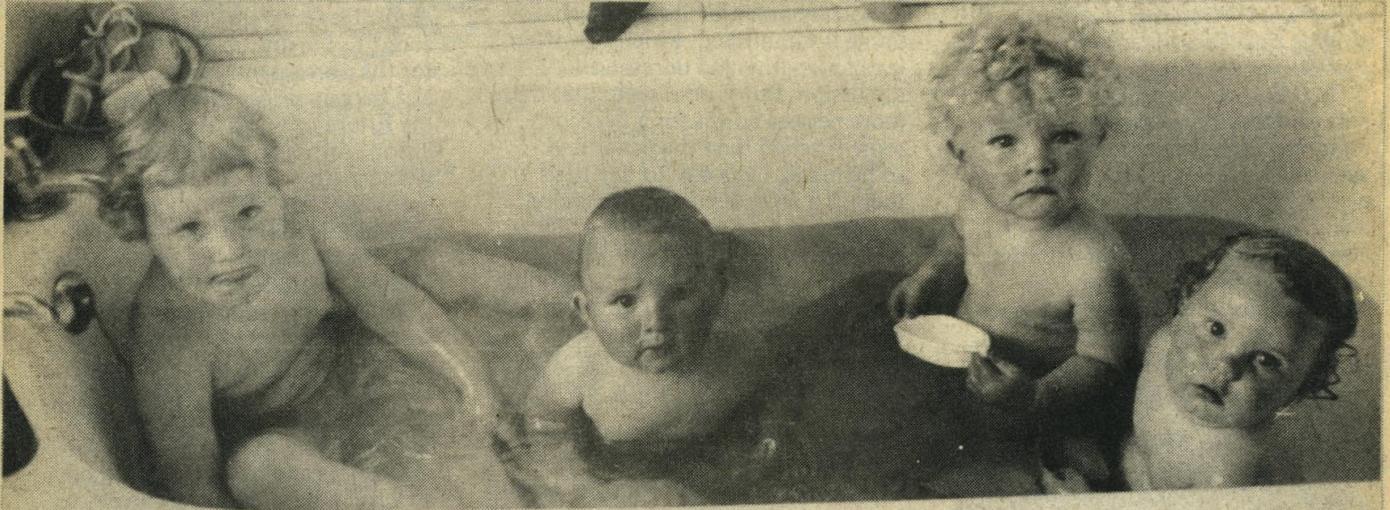
- Leeds: 10: 3w, ca, bld, beer, health,
motor repairs, language school, publ.
7: bk, 3 tht, architectural aid, animation
workshop, free school
- Leicester: 1: w 4: 2 pr, shoes, carriage
builders
- Leigh, Lancs: 1: alternative media project
- Lincs: 3: workshops, farmhouse childrens
Project, brass rubbing centre
- Liskeard, Cornwall: 1: w restaurant
- Liverpool: 2: bk + food, tailoring
2: bk, canal carriers
- London: 56, 4bk, 5 bld, 4 ca, 3 cr, 4 pr,
5 publ, 3 tht, 6w, 2 badges, 2 design,
3 education, 2 recycling, 3 records,
2 journals, info systems, decorating,
3rd world campaigns, computers,
removals, cleaning, security alarms,
bibliography, carnival, therapy,
publications distribution, disabled
self help, seeds, clothing, furniture,
video + film
22: bk, 4 bld, craft village, pr, 2 publ,
tht, glassware, office cleaners, law
centre, magazine distribution, poster
+ film, 'rational technology', 50
products Ltd, graphic design, toys,
taxis, woodworking, film, musicians
- Loughborough: 1: w
- Manchester: 13: bk, bld, ca, cr, 3 pr,
2 publ, 2w, computing, bakery, furni-
ture, removals, community project
- 3: cr, w, 3rd World centre
- Margate: 1: disabled workers co-ops
- Merthyr Tydfil: 1: light engineering
products 1: fashion wear
- Milton Keynes: 2: highway signing
systems, Comtek (AT) 2: bk + w,
furniture
- Navan, N.I.: 1: furniture
- Newcastle under Lyme: 1: w + cr
- Newcastle upon Tyne: 3: pr, tht, w
2: w, bld
- Newry, N.I.: 1: co-op workshops
- Northampton (+shire): 9: 2 plastics
+ chemicals, bakery, jeweller,
coatings and chemicals, 2 plant
hire + contractors, welding
7: 2 footwear, 2 clothing, w,
radiators, Daily Bread Co-op
- Norwich: 4: bk + ca, cr + pr + w + bld,
w, w restaurant
- Nottingham: 2: bk, pr
- Oldham (nr): 1: cr
- Oswestry: 1: w
- Otley: 1: woodwind instruments
- Oxford: 3: ca + w, language school,
co-op projects
2: educ. services, alt. tech. workshop
- Peterborough: 1: theatre
- Preston: 1: abrasives
- Ripon: 1: bld + workshops
- Rochdale: 1: journal 1: woodwork
- Settle, N. Yorks: 1: farmhouses youth
courses
- Shropshire: 1: ex-offenders etc. com-
munity
- Slough: 1: furniture
- Sheffield: 4: bk, pr, tht, w 1: ca
- Shrewsbury: 1: w + commune
- Skelmersdale: 1: wood crafts
- Stevenage: 1: artists
- Stoke on Trent: 1: w
- Southampton: 1: cr + communications
- Sunderland: 2: bld, w
- Surrey: 1: management research
- Swansea: 1: bk
- Telford: 1: Indust. agric. dom. equip-
ment mfrs
- Todmorden: 2: w, ca + bk + cr +
studio
- Truro: 1: Diggers of Albion
- Tyne and Wear: 2: 2 aids for disabled
- Wallsend upon Tyne: 1: community arts
- Welwyn: 1: computing
- Worcestershire: 1: antique furniture
repros
- York: 7: bk, bld, pr, w, bakery, bicycles,
lang. school = 1: w

Access: *Directory of Common Ownership Co-operatives*, ICOM, 1980
In the Making Nos. 4-6 (1977-79).



Can Big Be Beautiful?

What future for the Co-operative Commonwealth?



Delta-T's Think Tank at work.

HOW DOES a small wholefoods collective which grows to a 35,000 sq ft warehouse, a juggernaut and an annual turnover of £1¼ million remain a collective? Two Suma workers explain.

SUMA is a wholesale outlet for natural foods, serving the North of England. We bring foodstuffs in large quantities to our warehouse in Leeds which we then distribute to retail outlets from Sheffield northwards to the border with Scotland. In addition we supply a large collective warehouse (Green City Wholefoods) in Glasgow who distribute all over Scotland, and another smaller collective warehouse (March Wholefoods) in Nottingham who distribute in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. We do consider ourselves to be one of the more successful ventures to emerge from the 'New Co-operative Consciousness' and in this article hope to broach some of the multitude of factors and forces in Suma's development.

Suma came into being 1975 as a food co-op, in the downstairs rooms of a terraced house in Leeds, run by Anna Wyatt and Reg Taylor. About this time a group called the Natural Foods Union ceased to meet; this had comprised a number of wholefood businesses from all over England which had infrequent get-togethers and was concerned primarily with food quality. Several members from the North of England (plus a couple from Scotland) decided to combine meeting with a wider based more radical orientation, and so the Northern Whole-

food Co-operative came into being (later to flower as the Federation of Northern Wholefoods Co-operatives). Suma offered a delivery service to N.W.C. members and soon began to hold stocks of its own. We moved into a small warehouse in the centre of Leeds summer of 1976 but rapidly outgrew this, moving to a 35,000 sq. ft building around the corner in the winter of 1977/78.

The first thing to understand is that we are primarily a work collective. That is, we don't work and live in the same place, nor do we all live together, and most of us lead fairly independent social lives.

Nor are we a group who all share the same ideals or vision about what Suma is or should be, so this piece of writing is a largely subjective effort on the part of two workers.

Growth

Suma is our trading name, but we are actually registered as Triangle Wholefoods Collective, using the ICOM Model Rules as our legal framework. Until 1st October 1977 Suma had Reg as the sole proprietor, but on this date it became a registered co-operative. Anna and Reg have subsequently moved on, and of the present 12 workers only one tired person has survived from 1976.

Triangle as a name is the product of a long gone vision: in 1977 plans were well under way to move Suma of its minute and cramped 19th century premises in central Leeds, out to the country to an old mill in the village of Triangle, West Yorkshire.

It was envisaged that many members would live together as a housing co-operative in nearby property. In the meantime an ideal spacious warehouse was found in Leeds which is where the present day Suma is located. Retrospectively the

As for growth, there is no long term plan lurking in any filing cabinet. But there have been a number of decisions taken over the years which have led to expansion in the size and trade of Suma, whilst at the same time there have been several conscious moves to limit growth. For example, we have never spent any money on advertising, except for issuing regular price lists and displaying our name on our bags and

The signs are that this initial expansion is now levelling off. Weekly turnover has increased from about £4,000 end 1976 to £25,000 at present. We are now able to sell or distribute goods from many other collectives: three flour millers (Tipi of Aylesbury, Green City of Glasgow, Gillygate of York); peanut butter and herbs and spices from two different parts of the Durham Wholefood Co-operative; recipe leaflets from the Lifespan press; and magazines from Scottish and Northern Books Manchester.

Equal wages

At present we have 12 members (9 men, 3 women) who each have equal rights within the collective and receive equal remuneration, so that we pay a net wage each week irrespective of hours worked or job undertaken.

Net wage levels have

risen from £20 per week to £55 currently.

General work areas are: Warehousing; Driving; HGV driving (mostly collecting bulk lots from docks, warehouses etc); General office work; Accounts and controlling cash flow; Transport management and Buying.

In particular Accounts, Transport and Buying are specialised jobs requiring a sense of continuity and acquired knowledge which one person takes responsibility for, along with an understudy who is learning that job, who can deputise, and eventually assume that responsibility themselves and thence pass it on to another.

For practical reasons the HGV driving is limited to two people (who are currently but not necessarily the transport management) but in the three years Suma has been engaged in HGV trucking we have put four people through the test.

The more general areas of warehousing, office work and driving are undertaken in a more collective fashion on a day to day basis using a rota that ensures there are enough people to cover each area.

'Another perpetual dilemma is that of idealism versus pragmatism.'

Information flow

Working in this way requires a lot of information to be continuously passing between people. This is one aspect that we all feel needs working on a lot — to facilitate as much flow of information as possible and resist the tendency for people to hold or accumulate it in key positions of power (which is what any of those particular individual responsibilities have a potential to be).

Several present members have previously worked in other collectives and have promoted the feeling that a reasonable level of cohesion and communication in the group cannot be maintained with more than a dozen people. We reached these numbers in 1979 and would now prefer to support other collectives in new Suma related ventures rather than expand into them ourselves. Arrangements are in hand for a new group to prepare small packets and bottles of wholefoods for distribution by us. This collective is renting space in our warehouse but will be a completely autonomous entity. They expect the project to come on stream by the end of this summer.

Every week on Wednesday afternoon we hold a meeting at which the business is discussed and individuals can air their views and feelings in the context of the group. All decision making here is by consensus, a fundamental premise on which Suma is established, which can often lead to lengthy and unresolved discussion. But it does seem that the more necessary it is for a decision to be reached then the easier it is to be made. On a day to day basis there is a large degree of delegation in decision making, and it is really a question of trust and confidence that we have in each other to get on with the job in hand and to bring to a Wednesday meeting those things which we consider of greater significance and warranting wider debate. So really we are answerable and accountable to the collective as a whole.

One of the main reasons for working in a co-operative is for control and determination of the work situation, remuneration, and conditions. In the early years we very much subsidised the business with our labour, working long and hard hours for low reward. We have steadily been working towards paying ourselves a 'decent living wage' something we consider essential for co-ops to achieve if they are to be considered a viable and accessible alternative to conventional work situations and to establish themselves firmly in the employment market.

Credibility with the bank

What is our work efficiency? A question that is often pondered. As already mentioned we have adopted a degree of specialisation as a matter of expediency without compromising our collective ideals. We are constantly looking for ways to improve and are experimenting with different ways of organising (at present we have a fairly complex rota). It is common for people, especially those within them, to equate collectives with inefficiency. This kind of defeatism we reject and do consider ourselves at least as efficient, if not more so, as any regular business.

By conventional financial standards, Suma has undoubtedly been successful. Turnover has regularly increased, cheques haven't bounced, the overdraft limit has been adhered to, bills have been paid not too late, and there have been small profits declared. Since we have decided to keep ourselves going by trading, we feel we have to go part of the way with the business world. What it means

though, is that we have considerable credibility now with our bank, suppliers, and other sources of finance. In 1978 we were able to get a lease on our present building without having to sign any guarantees, and we are at present about to borrow up to £40,000 for the purchase of our building at a bargain price: this will secure the future of Suma until the revolution. Although the negotiations were lengthy and difficult we were eventually able to persuade the bank to lend this sum without any form of personal liability on the members of the collective.

Numbers of suppliers are taken aback when we try to explain our structure to them, but when the bills keep getting paid they don't seem to bother too much. We've also been able to look at other sorts of finances and have just obtained a new truck by a leasing arrangement. We feel that any business, whatever its structure, can only accomplish its aims, whatever they may be, if they keep the financial side together.

Constantly evolving

Some consideration of the market must be given. Suma was fortunate in that through a group of wholefood shops, a need became apparent for a warehouse in the north — so it was founded with a firm commitment of support without which it might indeed have never blossomed. At the same time there was a great upsurge in the consumption of wholefoods which hadn't really been anticipated. So this continually expanding market (somewhat stabilised now, though) has been another essential element in our rapid growth.

We offer a regular delivery service using our two 4 tonne box vans, and the service to customers *via* this is somewhat different to a conventional business. Although we are renowned for making mistakes, the fact that the driver is a collective member means that they are acting as an 'emissary' and can act upon situations, take responsibility, give information/explanations, collect feedback etc. instead of the usual, 'well, I'm just doing my job' or 'oh, that's more than my job's worth'. In this way we maintain a close and friendly link with our customers.

Another perpetual dilemma is that of idealism versus pragmatism. At Suma we started with very high ideals indeed, but over the years these have become tempered with the practicalities of running a business so that now we have reached a workable and sustaining mean

Two Suma workers

Winds Of Change

NORTHUMBRIAN Energy Workshop employs seven people in the market town of Hexham, manufacturing, supplying and installing wind energy equipment. One of its founders, Nick Murgatroyd, describes this new common ownership company.

BACK in 1974, in Hexham, there came into being an organisation called New Age Access* (see UC 26) acting as a focal point for New Age awareness in the extreme north of England. For four years it grew until in 1978 it was employing some nine or ten people all actively involved mainly on local activities based on self-help.

By operating as a co-operative the 'value-for-money' of the limited grants made to NAA were considerable but, during 1978, as the rural areas began to lose out once again to the inner city, it was obvious that, to continue at all, New Age Access would have to support itself.

The economic pressure was thus on for the creation of a new company, but other reasons were also bringing about a change, New Age operates effectively in its chosen fields of education, R & D and information exchange. But all these are service activities, mentally creative perhaps but only occasionally 'physically' creative. Since 1976, NAA have been trying to take over a disused hospital site (see UC 26) to create a space whereby some practical work of the type necessary for a change to a post-industrial society could be carried out. After 2½ years of running through bureaucratic treacle, frustrations over this lack of a practical outlet for those wishing to express their physical energies, were beginning to cause instabilities within the group.

*New Age Access are best known for their windmill designs, like the Maximill featured in UC28 and their role as an AT advice and development centre for the North-east of England. They also publish pamphlets on other subjects, such as *One Man's Munch*, a wholefood recipe book. In UC26 we described their plans to establish an AT centre at Wooley hospital, so far unrealised.

Price List (including p&p):

How to build a beehive £1.50; *Windworker* £1.30; *Planetfolders* 60p each; *Funbook* 60p; and *One Man's Munch* 70p.

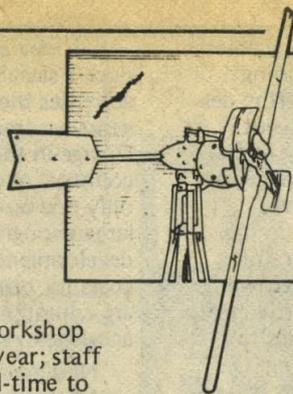
One Year Old

Northumbrian Energy Workshop has now been trading for a year; staff have increased from one full-time to six full-time and one part-time, with wages averaging 300% of social security rate. Turnover this year is anticipated at over £100,000 and slowly New Age Access activities, heavily pruned during 1979, are beginning to reappear. So it would seem that we have successfully weathered the change, foretold in the last edition of the NAA newsletter *Plans Afoot*, to a self-supporting co-operative finding its feet in the world of commerce. The internal changes to the group involved have, however, been immense and the stresses and strains that have been working on the group identity are still not totally absorbed.

New Age Access is working towards an 'ideal' rural society that is a long way from the 20th century industrialised UK society that NEW has to operate within. The level of compromise necessary is considerable, even more than was imagined in the original Maximill project (see UC 28) and often the end vs. means argument is difficult to resolve. Add this to the pressures of a market economy and the general disapproval of the financial community to co-operatives and it is obvious that a strong group identity is essential to cope with the problems.

The extent to which Northumbrian Energy Workshop has put new age principles into products is at the moment confined to our attempts to make everything to the highest quality we can achieve, hoping that the slight extra cost to the purchaser is offset by reliability, long-life and good servicing arrangements. We are mostly working with wind equipment, the basic components of which are imported from normal 20th century industries worldwide. Despite a reasonable mark-up we make no surplus on these components as we have to spend time and materials on all of them to bring them up to an acceptable quality level. From the smallest to the largest we've handled they all suffer from detail design faults that require modifications.

Eventually the only way to solve this problem will be for us to produce our own machine entirely. This we



Lowering a 2 kW dunlute wind generator; after overhaul at our workshop it now provides a back-up supply for a North Yorkshire smallholder.

will do, but competing with a buoyant US market will be difficult as a mass-produced article is bound to be cheaper than a hand-built batch-produced product. There is evidently a need for a reassessment of the value of 'quality'.

Specialist Skills

In its internal operation the organisation has maintained the co-operative principle although the method of operation has changed in the new environment. Constitutionally (we are registered at Companies' House), we have an executive committee which meets weekly with a general meeting for policy decisions once a month. In practice everyone goes to all of them and decision-making carries on much as before. Individuals are however being forced to take sizeable day-to-day decisions and individual responsibility has become necessarily more pronounced than it was in the days when everyone decided everything. Now that time available for meeting is limited endless discussions on the pros and cons of £25 expenditure have disappeared into history.

Inevitably the inherent danger of job specialisation has arisen. So

'We must depend on our own abilities to create the new out of nothing.'

far this has not caused any problems but the ideal of everyone doing anything is slowly disappearing despite what we can do to prevent it. It is probably still too early to say whether job-swapping is a necessary component of a co-operative.

Nearly everyone in the group has gone through a massive retraining exercise since joining (skilled wind turbine installers being a little rare!) and as the learning continues the new skills are still developing. Only when a skilled task becomes personally unsatisfying will the question of skills exchange really arise. If the level of skill is fairly limited, say on a production line or in a retail outlet, then this boredom threshold will be lower but the interchangeability of labour will be higher. In our case individual skills are already developing to the 'specialist' level.

An obvious extension to this situation is to involve more organisations with similar philosophies in a skills-exchange grouping and, in our area, we have always been strong supporters of ICOM North. The condition of the co-operative movement up there is healthy, although there is an organisational problem at present as grants expire; given another 12 months or so, there could be some effective co-ordination of resources. Co-operatives are nearly all small organisations and eventually they must compete against large organisations with greater buying and selling power. Only by co-operatives linking together will it be possible to compete in the stormy years ahead prior to the eventual decline of the mega-business.

To a large extent NEW has delegated its co-operative education role to ICOM, another victim of the radical pruning necessary to keep NAA afloat, but it provides support as necessary. We are trying a similar approach with NATTA, acting as it does to promote and co-ordinate AT activities. The concept is great and deserves the active support of everyone aiming towards the ideal of a controllable, sustainable technology.

Competing with Honda

Both ICOM and NATTA are slow moving through lack of funds and NAA has slowed to a crawl for the same reason. The usual complaint (totally valid) is the short-sightedness of the Government (of whatever persuasion) in not providing funds for the chosen cause. The great danger in this is in leaving the level of activity at complaining. If the number of successful co-operatives was increased to a level where a

small levy on turnover could produce a sizeable fund to co-ordinate activities then within a very few years we could see a substantial change in the industrial base of our country. At the moment there is only one co-operative in the UK large enough to provide funds for development work or setting-up costs for other co-ops. Once there are a hundred then growth will accelerate rapidly.

New Age Access was and always will be an apolitical organisation. Similarly Northumbrian Energy Workshop sees the long-term solutions not in political terms but in ways of self-help. This is not to say that we don't believe political pressure or the 'anti' lobby are not important, but in the last resort we must depend on our own ability to create the new out of nothing, hoping that those involved in trying to change the old will prevent it collapsing on top of us.

One could say that NEW has had a fairly easy ride, moving into a specialist field without a great deal of competition. NEW personnel have many years experience of wind turbines and related work, and, given the inherent problems of starting any business, especially a co-operative, when the only source of loan finance is ICOF with its limited (but much valued) resources, then it would be ridiculous to immediately leap into competition with Honda unless you were forced to. We are not a defensive co-operative and we can choose our market doing our best to demonstrate that good service and high quality products comes from a supplier whose workforce has all the advantages of a co-operative organisation.

It is inevitable that co-operatives will start in small specialised fields and, like other small businesses, they will have a short breathing space before the lumbering multi-nationals start muscling in. We are determined to maintain that advantage and to become a successful business able to support those arms of our movement that will never be able to support themselves.

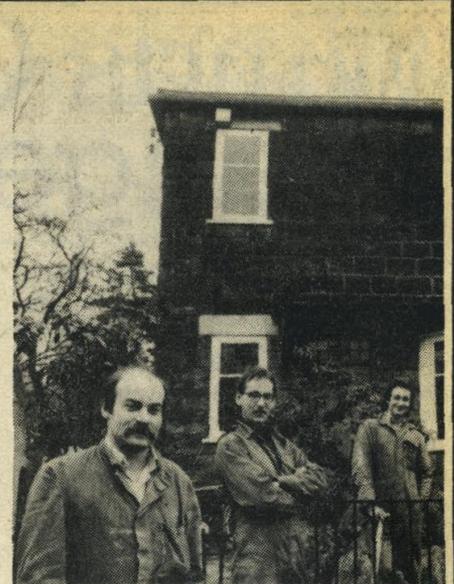
Nick Murgatroyd

Access

Northumbrian Energy Workshop
Tanners Yard
Gilesgate
Hexham
Northumberland

Tel: Hexham (0434) 604809

If you would like to visit, we would be grateful if you could make prior arrangements. Written queries on AT problems etc. are always welcome, an SAE enclosed if possible.



THE CO-OPS which make the most thorough attempts at equality and sharing are those known as collectives. Tess McMahon describes the difficulties and the delights, from her own experience. But she argues that these radical co-ops can and must be made accessible to a wider public.

GREY MEN who've long ago lost touch with any human values and life play power games across our planet and threaten all that live upon it. We are made passively acquiescent to restricted roles.

We need ways of helping each other break out of the repression and to challenge it, to take control of our lives. I find it very sad when even people who have rebelled against society's expectations are narrowed down and end up living in ways they formerly rejected. For example when a couple wants to share waged work and childcare, and yet turn into a typical nuclear family. The man is out at work for far too long, because that's the only way they can get enough income to live and pay off the mortgage, which is the only way they can see of getting decent living conditions. So the man is cut off from the children and home, and the woman is there too much, servicing the man and children. Individually we are thwarted.

Challenging

Together, however, some of us are attempting to create better living and work situations by setting up housing and workers' co-operatives. I'd like them to be accessible to people who are fed up with the alienation of their present situations — with the dullness or overspecialisation or hierarchy or domination of some over others . . . And I'd like being in co-ops to help us to be stronger and happier and freer and more caring, in our own lives individually

Working Collectively

and together, and in challenging the injustices and inhuman values of our society.

But we're not used to co-operating, and the ruling people and powerful institutions of our society try to prevent it (unless they think they can benefit from it) so it's quite a struggle. There is a danger of romanticising co-ops, because that can lead to early disillusionment and demoralisation, over problems which are actually almost bound to occur.

I've lived and worked co-operatively a lot of the time since 1973 and would like to comment from my experience on some of the recurring issues and some of the things we've learnt.

When no men were around

Out of a concern about poverty and injustice in the Third World some of us started 'Uhuru' in Oxford in 1973, selling handicrafts from Third World co-operatives. In no time we were also immersed in alternative and local politics, selling wholefoods and running a cafe. And we had to begin to work out how to carry through our ideas about co-operation in our own group. There was openness and energy and enthusiasm and ideas — and long hours and low pay and conflict and confusion! Some of our first meetings were terrible — dominated by the confident and articulate, who also tended to get the most interesting work.

Even after a few years, when the women had become much stronger, there was a point when it was men who'd gained possession of desks in the office writing articles and sorting out accounts, while it was mainly women working in the cafe relating more immediately to people and issues. But we gradually found ways of sharing skills, rotating responsibilities, quietening down the domineering, encouraging the under-confident. Still, it took an occasion when there were no men around, for people to realise that women really could run the whole show (and perhaps for them to realise it themselves!). And people outside weren't convinced that there wasn't really a boss, until the man they thought it to be went away, and we clearly continued.

In the next co-op I was in, Leeds Building Collective, we were more concerned to provide ourselves with work and pay conditions that would enable people with family responsibilities to be

involved, and which gave us similar gains to those won in the Trade Union movement. So as much as possible we gave ourselves flexible hours, a good hourly wage rate, sick pay, holiday pay, paternity leave and pay. And we organised ourselves in ways by now well recognised as the usual collective approach: consensus decision-making at weekly meetings, sharing skills and labouring, rotating administrative tasks, equal hourly wage rates . . . Problems while I was

A Good Day

SOMETIMES it all comes together and feels right, working, and in my case, living, co-operatively. Like today, at People In Common, in Burnley. We worked all day on a building job (as Altham Workers' Co-op). I was outdoors, mainly on top of a ladder, enjoying the air and the view of the hills, and the work was quite relaxing and rewarding. And when it got a bit boring or I got a bit tired I could have a break. We got into a stirring political argument at lunch-time (so extended our lunch-break) about whether there's any point in co-op members being in a union; a co-op can be a real choice for most people; we're really in control of our work situation; we'd prefer actually to have less control and to be able to switch off at the end of the work day . . .

I walked home at the end of the day with a good feeling from the physical outdoor work, leaving a little time for some intellectual activity (writing this) before eating (a meal cooked by the 'support' person for the day) and having the regular People In Common meeting. I chatted to the kids and a friend in the main communal house, had a cup of tea, and then went to the comfort and peace of my own room a couple of minutes walk away in another of the small housing co-op houses . . .

there were financial strains particularly because of lack of capital, difficulty in gaining skills quickly enough for efficiency, and, for me, being the only woman.

In Burnley, Lancashire

These seem to be a bit less of a problem in the building co-op I'm in now, Altham Workers' Co-op, in Burnley, Lancashire. There are several women and we're not trying to earn so much money — which is more possible because we're also living together and are in low cost housing. The Workers' Co-op was set up by the



People In Common Housing Co-op, with the aim of having more control over their work as well as housing. We run a creche for the children so that everyone can do waged work. All income is pooled, basic requirements being provided out of the pool, and everyone taking a weekly personal allowance.

There are half a dozen small houses close together, with a variety of individual, small group and communal spaces and facilities. The group also owns an old corn mill a few miles away, on the edge of another small town. It's gradually being done up, with the hope of living there later, and crops are being grown on some of the 3½ acres of land.

Decisions are made at regular meetings, and structures are changed depending on what people want to try at the time. Work and the rest of life are more integrated than in the Leeds Building Collective, which can have drawbacks (e.g. talking about damp proof courses at midnight) but mainly feels quite good.

One problem is that the degree of co-operation in several spheres can make it quite difficult for other people to join in. There are arguments for making the Workers' Co-op more separate from People In Common. But that might lead to changes that the present group don't want, so there may be more to be said for encouraging another workers' co-op to set up, controlled in the way its members choose.

Consensus?

It's relatively easy now to list generally accepted ways of collective working in small co-ops. But even if we're doing all the 'right' things, it can still feel quite wrong at certain times or for some people. And it can be very difficult to pin down what is really happening in terms of power, emotions, feelings, energy . . .

For example, all sorts of things can go wrong with consensus decision-making. It can favour those who like to function in meetings, or conversely, those who are reluctant to change. It's often difficult for a group to be effective, dynamic. Often those who innovate, have ideas, create change, can feel too attacked and blocked, and may eventually leave; others may feel trampled on. People are emotionally attached to their ideas — often new ideas come out of strong feelings. We can be scared of suggestions which threaten the status quo which represents some equilibrium. There can be currents of emotional blackmail or alternatively of attempts to blind with facts.

The basis of consensus is respect for all in a group. We need to find ways of keeping this basis while still being able to throw up lots of ideas, decide which ones to act upon, be outward-looking and effective. We also need to be stable enough to carry things through, without individuals feeling trapped.

'... so people will join co-ops for a better life, not to be martyrs to a cause.'

We need to stick together, take ourselves seriously, both in our groups and as a movement for radical change, and make ourselves open to interested people. We can use agencies like Co-operative Development Groups to foster co-ops in local areas — and build links with the trade union movement, and local political action we support. But CDAs often seem to those of us actually in co-ops to be made up of people riding on our backs — liking what we're doing but not prepared to do it themselves. We wonder about their motives. Co-operators must have grass-roots control of co-operative activity. If we use agencies we should make sure it's on our terms.

We should help each other with workswaps, regional and national gatherings, and use groups like 'Work-aid' to quickly learn management skills. We should make co-ops places it's clearly good to be in — so people will join them for a better life, not to be martyrs to a cause.

Tess McMahon

Access

Uhuru, 35 Cowley Road, Oxford.
Leeds Building Collective, 4 Knowle Road
Leeds 4.

Altham Workers' Co-op and People In
Common, 58 Clarence Street, Burnley,
Lancs. (We would like new members —
write if you're interested in visiting.)

Delta-T

COMMUNES are moving into more skilled technology. Jane, a member, describes how the goats and the scientific instruments get along together at Parsonage Farm, 'the only commune', the story goes, 'with all the spice jars in alphabetical order'.

PARSONAGE FARM housing co-operative has an old house, a string of barns and about 3 acres of organic garden sandwiched between the Cambridgeshire fens and a modern housing estate on the edge of a large village. It was bought and established as a commune 9 years ago, and converted from joint ownership to a housing co-operative in 1978. There are 9 adults, 3 small children and a cat in the house, and 3 goats, about 20 chickens 1 rabbit and thousands of trees in the garden.

Seven of the residents together with 3 people from the village work here in Delta-T Devices, a scientific instrument making business which started with one person in a small shed and has expanded into the ten of us who now work in a self converted cattle barn with a well equipped machine shop, a stylish and carpeted light assembly and paperwork room, both of which have enticing views of chicken runs and fruit trees, and a large storage and packaging space upstairs with bizarre and beautiful beams.

The instruments made by Delta-T are used in ecological and plant breeding research, the customers being mainly universities and research organisations. We export over 60 per cent of our goods, frequently to developing countries. Our price list, sent to every customer, is headed by the statement: *Delta-T Devices is a business co-operatively run by its workforce. We have chosen to make instruments for work directly related to human welfare (e.g. for agriculture, ecology, geophysics). As a matter of conscience we do not wish to supply instruments for military work or to establishments closely linked to an oppressive regime, and we prefer not to receive such orders...* We like to maintain contact with our customers, and welcome any ideas for improve-



ments to or new applications for our products. Help and advice are freely given if you need them'.

Although Delta-T is 'co-operatively run', with decisions made by consensus (as is the case in commune meetings), all work paid equally and profits used for the business, it is officially a partnership — albeit with a rather unusual partnership agreement. We would like to change to a *bona fide* co-operative but would instantly run up against a changeover tax bill of several thousand pounds and would also thereafter be liable to corporation tax rates. As it now seems there is a distant possibility that this situation may change, we are hanging on to the partnership, but have registered an ICOM co-operative.

9 children, soon to be 11

Within the limits of having to honour our consignment despatch dates, people working for Delta-T choose when and how much to work — this ranges from three people who regularly work a 30-35 hour week, to a couple of people who may not work those many hours in a month.

Between us we have 9 children, soon to be 11, there is a creche twice a week, and we rely on people not directly involved with the business to look after the children while we have meetings. This is paid at the same hourly rate as all other work, as is cleaning which is done on a weekly rota.

In the Tudor barn adjacent to Delta-T the commune's newest member has built a pottery which besides providing the house and garden with subtle ceramics has also given us welcome new contacts with the villagers. The other resident who is not a Delta-T worker divides his time between teaching and making prismatic jewellery. Together these two have been travelling to fairs and extending our horizons beyond the front gate.

In all we do we try to rotate jobs and responsibilities as much as possible. Although we're not aiming at self-sufficiency we enjoy growing what we eat and doing as much practical work as we can ourselves. We like to share our knowledge and skills and during the past year have helped a couple of groups from Cambridge to make their own woodstoves, had a flurry of wwoofers, including some from a special school, and are in the process of swapping accountancy for plastering.

It's not all rosy, but it can feel that way on a sunny June afternoon!

Jane Jane

Access

If you want to know more about us — meet us at the co-ops fair, or write (no unannounced visits please) to Parsonage Farm, 128 Low Road, Burwell, Cambridge. CB5 0EJ.

'IF LUCY and her friends were impractical drop-outs', wrote the Daily Mail, 'they might have formed a sewing circle and tried to sell the proceeds in local shops'.

Lucy Spawton explains what they did instead.

WE ARE a group of women who came to Wales independently in the 70's with our families in search of a better life. Most of us had dreams of self-sufficiency but the thing we all had in common was that we ended up broke! Jobs are very scarce, particularly for women, and some of us wanted to go back to the cities so we decided to create our own jobs. Ten of us met regularly in a shed/workshop to make plans.

We had a variety of skills between us (mostly rusty after a few years having children) and it gradually emerged that the thing we all enjoyed was sewing. We thought we would make clothes which were not generally available at reasonable prices. Clothes in natural fibres that were tough and comfortable but also beautiful. We invented our Freedom Suit which all our children liked, and some unique wrapover trousers for women.

We formed ourselves into a co-op called Ragged Robin after a flower that grew outside our workshop, and applied for and received a loan from ICOF (the finance branch of ICOM whose aim is to help with the establishment of

co-operatives.) We also applied for a small factory from the Development Board for Rural Wales.

While we were waiting for the factory to be built we went off on TOPs Courses to learn to be industrial sewing machinists. We also researched fabric costings and sales methods. We discovered Bedford Cord, a strong British fabric that used to be used for riding breeches, and had it dyed to our own exciting colours. It was perfect for our Freedom Suits; we decided to sell by mail order to keep costs down.

We moved into our factory in November and have been busy ever since.

People often ask why we became a co-operative and no-one remembers whose suggestion it was. It seemed to be a natural way to work. We started by sharing our skills and filling in for each other when our children were ill. The responsibilities were everyone's so must the profits be. We also plan to use some of our profits to open a creche for any workers in the area as well as ourselves, and to help other co-operatives.

We worked together for nearly a year before we earned any money and it wasn't as smooth a path as I've made it sound, but we enjoy working together very much. It is good to earn a living and have a large measure of control over one's work. We are determined to succeed and share our success with others.

Lucy Spawton

AN OBVIOUS area for the formation of co-ops is any business in which the main asset is highly skilled labour. But as Computercraft report there are particular problems.

COMPUTERCRAFT has been operating since October 1979, and is registered under ICOM Model Rules. We are a group of six computer programmers and analysts, all full-time co-op members. We design and write the computer programs necessary to make a machine useful. Without programs to run on it a machine would just sit there, humming expensively, like a stereo system without records.

Our programs have been mainly to do with things like Stock Control, Accounts and Company Records, and our clients mostly small businesses or other computer firms. Usually we write to fit the exact requirements of one particular computer user. This is an expensive process, rather like hiring a recording group to make one copy of a record to be played just on your own stereo system. We hope to go beyond this, but it takes more

resources to produce and market a program suitable for many different users.

When we came together to form Computercraft we each had about two or three years experience of working in the computer industry. Our general aims were to get more control over our work, to ensure that it was not used to make people redundant, repress or kill them, to explore better uses of computer technology, and to demystify computer skills. We have since taken a number of crucial decisions as we have tried to find a visible way to realise these aims inside the capitalist marketplace. For instance, we work as much as possible on the newer cheaper types of machine. In consequence what we are now is only

Computercraft Ltd.

**Tailored Software
for Microsystems**

Telephone
01 226 0656

129 Newington Green Road,
London N1 4RA.

one example of what a co-op in the computer industry could be like; other approaches could turn out better.

We hope other co-ops will form. At the moment there are two other co-ops that we know about in the computer field, Galdor and Analysis/Synthesis, both exploring different lines of development to us. If you have the relevant skills and are interested in starting your own co-op in this sector we would like to help. Send us an A4 sheet with your ideas and skills listed on it and we will xerox and circulate your details to anyone else who does

this. For the moment Computercraft itself is sticking at its present size.

It is important, especially as we are encouraging other workers to abandon their clearcut role as employee, to be honest about our failures as a co-op. It is all too easy to present outsiders with a false picture of unqualified success. So far we have been compromising on most of our main aims. We have failed to achieve a satisfactory overall wage level, to rigorously vet all of our clients, or to do much in the way of demystifying or providing access to computers. We have had our fair share of interpersonal

conflict. Of late we have been forced into 'jouyshopping', that is into sending members to work away from our site on other companies' projects, which obviously invites fragmentation. These problems will ultimately lead to our disintegration if we are unable to solve them.

We are coming to the Co-op Fair, not to sell people computer systems they don't need, but to learn how such problems have been overcome by others.

Access

Computercraft, 129 Newington Green Rd, London, N1 4RA.

Interplay

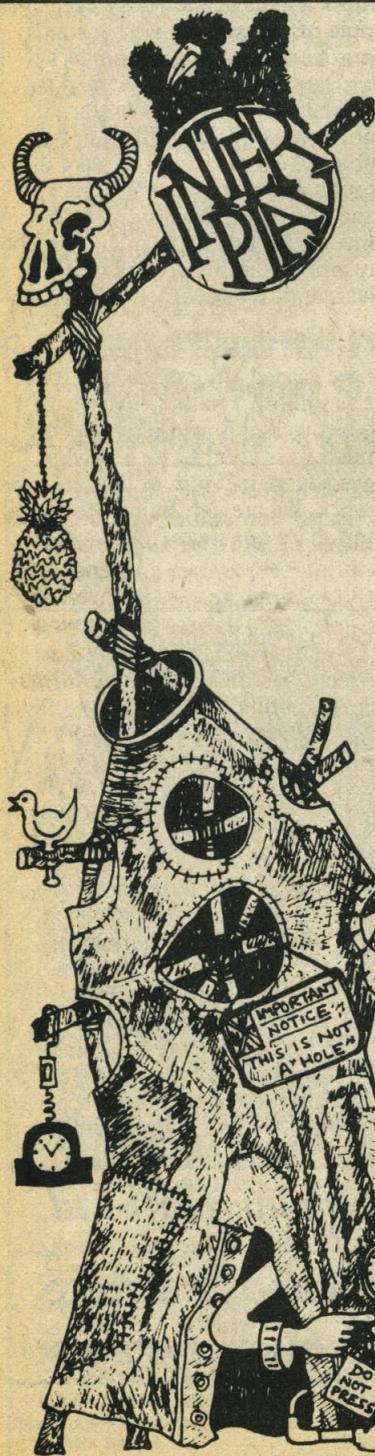
'MOST plays could take place without an audience. Interplay's actors need the audience there. They try and break through the barriers between actors and audience. In day centres people wake up!'

In a cafe in Leeds Steve Skinner is talking about Interplay's new 'summer outdoor show' called *The End Of The World* which will be performed at the Co-ops Fair. Steve is the administrator for the Armley, Leeds, based theatre group, which has five performers.

'Interplay was started ten years ago by a group who lived together and did arts and community work together. Then the arts side developed full scale productions and it became worth touring them more widely, all over Leeds and elsewhere in West Yorkshire.'

They do six shows a year, Steve explains, tailored to their varied venues: pensioners clubs, old peoples' (and one or two psychiatric day centres, playgroups, youth clubs, handicapped children in special schools (ESNS), pubs, community centres and festivals.

Their shows draw on the traditions of circus and pantomime, using colourful props, much music, and ways of involving the audience in anything from 'feely boxes' into which they have to put their hands to magical tricks. The six form the board of management of the theatre group, and run it as a co-operative.



THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD AS YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE! YOU'LL DIE LAUGHING !!

No Messing

CO-OPS are too often badly managed. Muddled meetings and inadequate legal and financial structures reduce the workers' real control over a co-op. So argues Freer Spreckley of Beechwood College, whose Workaid courses are designed as a remedy.

'A PRODUCER CO-OPERATIVE is not a business like others: but at the same time it is subject to the same economic constraints. A producer co-operative which is an economic failure is automatically a social failure. A producer co-operative which is solely an economic success is of no social interest.'

Antoine Antoni, Secretary-General of SCOP, the French Confederation of Producer Co-operatives.

A BUSINESS run co-operatively is based on a radical concept of the relationship between capital and labour. Traditionally, 'capital hires labour' with the overriding emphasis on making a 'profit' over and above any benefits either to the business itself or the workforce. Diametrically opposed to this is a co-operative where 'labour hires capital' with the emphasis on personal and social 'liberation' from the exploitation of capital.

The starting point of the co-operative is its legal constitution and it is this that in the long run will determine its democratic nature. To begin with a co-operative will be heavily influenced by the founder members, but as time goes on new members will increasingly rely on the legal framework for guidance. It is important to get it straight in the beginning, and recognise the need to make clear to each new member exactly what a co-operative is and how it is legally established.

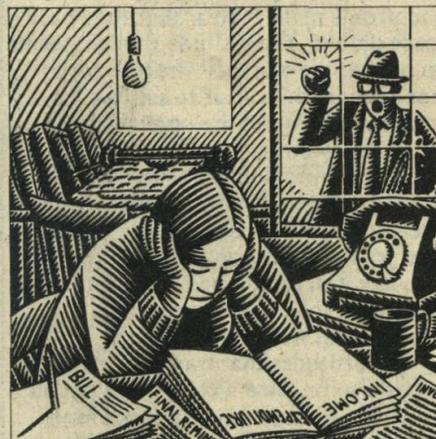
As an extension of the constitution a contract of employment for each employee is required by law. This should set out the terms and conditions of employment, what responsibility each members has as a co-owner, and how the democratic procedures are made: decision making, appointment of new members, dismissals, etc. Traditionally it's a one way relationship from the employer to the employee. In a co-operative it's two way, each member is both an employer and employee.

All too often in co-operatives the relationship between the individual and the collective is too vague and leads

to general confusion and inefficiency. This relationship between the individual and collectives must be given considerable attention for efficient co-operative management.

The key to participation

The regular meeting of a co-operative is the collective process of management, making decisions, setting policy, planning etc., and acts as a forum for debates on the social and organisational implications of the co-operative. Meetings are also a medium for internal information exchange. Often there is only one general meeting conducted in the same style to discuss all the issues. This is bad management. If the meeting becomes dull and unrelated to the issues at hand it will soon be a resented chore, instead of an exciting process of development. The meeting is not there to control the individuals, but to give them support. It's also not



advisable to try and run the day to day operation in the full meetings but to set policy and give guidance. As long as the meetings are controlled by the collective and the style varied in order to meet the particular needs then they become an efficient form of management.

Like any business co-ops need good management to see that the books are kept, financial control is maintained, stocking and ordering are kept in line with each other, marketing and production are run smoothly etc; without it the business will fail and so will the co-operative. Many co-operatives are formed with an anti-business stance and an attitude that what is important is working together. I would not deny this, but suggest that we can work together better if the

business is efficiently managed. And that through efficient management working together becomes all the more rewarding. Once again the style of democratic management depends on the particular nature of the co-operative though emphasis should be placed on rotating tasks, and clear and scrupulous communication.

Communication has been widely identified as the key to participation. The trouble is we rely too heavily on one or two forms — there are hundreds of ways of communicating and it's up to each co-op to look around and pick and choose for itself and develop as many non-verbal and unwritten ways of exchanging information and making decisions as can be comfortably integrated into its democratic practice.

Two common styles of management

In some co-ops traditional management practices prevail, and in these it's questionable whether or not they are democratic, and even whether they may not sometimes be less participatory than capitalist businesses.

The other end of the spectrum shows some alarming overkill of participation whereby a small co-operative can get burdened with the minutiae of individual character traits. This is all good experimental stuff, but if co-ops are to represent an alternative which is accessible to unskilled and unqualified working people then a balance of these styles of management is needed.

It is important to have an overview of the co-operative. Usually only the management has the necessary information for this, while the shop floor worker gets a very narrow but more detailed view. Long term strategy, or 'corporate planning' as it is known, is the key to maintaining an overview. It is no more than planning ahead, deciding whether to change products, purchase new equipment, expand, etc, etc. It is also a good vehicle around which to involve all the worker members in a debate about their co-operative.

Many co-ops cling to the 'small is beautiful' approach and suffer from lack of capital due to their smallness. It will become increasingly important for co-operatives to either merge or expand to survive and their organisational structure will have to change accordingly, possibly developing into subsidiary co-ops with a worker controlled holding co-op. The holding co-operative would retain the assets and lease them to the subsidiaries thus retaining the capital under one roof for reinvestment etc. while maintaining small manageable working units for production. In its simplest form the optimum number of workers may be

about 50 to keep this balance between small and big.

It is unlikely that a co-operative will reach perfection. Participation is dynamic and ever-changing. The more developed and the better ways of communication a co-operative reach the further the potential horizon stretches.

Freer Spreckley

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Fair Points

CO-OPERATION is often regarded as a panacea for all the ills of our late industrial society. This is an illusion, as two comradely critics, Helen Sanders and Ellen Buckingham, point out.

AT planning meetings for the Co-ops Fair, I've at times been disturbed by some people's apparent assumption that if it's a co-op it *must* be worthwhile. I question this. There are many other important issues involved in setting up better work situations, apart from just the ways work and profits are shared. Such issues as what products/services are produced, whether they are ecologically sound, and how much they perpetuate unnecessary consumerism.

And the position of women and children is important too, not only in whether women can be part of the co-op and whether provision for childcare is included, but the wider implications of the ways in which the products or raw materials used are part of



women's oppression.

I've worked in co-ops before, but at present I'm working alone as a carpenter. This has many advantages for me, such as overcoming my fears of taking responsibility for every aspect of my work — finding work, estimating, keeping records and accounts, and carrying out each job from start to finish. No time or energy is wasted in having meetings, I can make my own decisions when and where I like, and I learn from my own mistakes rather than looking for ways to blame them on other people:

I hope to work co-operatively with others again in the future, hoping that I will be clearer about why I choose to do so when I have more experience of the other options, and have overcome my fear of them.

Helen Sanders

IT SEEMS that most of the 'alternative' workers' co-operatives support the labour movement and struggles of trade unions. I feel therefore it is important to open up the issue of how we as co-operatives join in the fight for a new labour government and strong trade unionism.

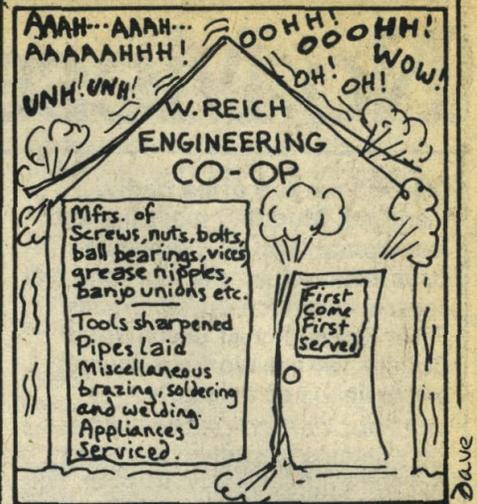
Many small workers' co-operatives shopfronts make it clear that they back trade unions. The attitude though, seems to be that the workers' struggle does not apply within. As if to say 'we have already found the ideal work situation — but just need to iron out a few small problems' (long hours, unsafe working conditions, inadequate breaks, very low wages. .) The fact is that trade unions bring workers together, they are well established — (powerful), and have evolved simple methods of dealing with work crises.

The attitudes that trade unions are necessary for some workers, but not all, is elitist and separatist. It stems from habits of thinking inured into the middle to upper middle class make-up of the majority of co-op workers.

Trade unions are not solely necessary where there is blatant hierarchy. At present our alternative workers' co-operatives are spending an unrealistic amount of time taking part in often fruitless discussions which culminate frequently with the weaker giving in or resigning. As trade unions are the backbone of the Labour Party we should join and actively support them.

We cannot continue to applaud unions from the sidelines. No-one is perfect. We can benefit from unions as much as any other worker. Eventually we could even form our own branches.

Ellen Buckingham



"CO-OPERATIVE COMMUNITIES are not merely something it would be nice to have", argues John Southgate, 'if we don't build such communities there may well soon be no living persons left to co-operate with'.

ECONOMIC and social forces in the world are pushing in a different direction. The first is towards three unthinkable calamities, nuclear war, famine and disaster. This is where western imperialism is pushing the world. The second is towards bureaucratic state socialism on Soviet lines. Although the likelihood of war and famine would be less, I shall argue that bureaucratic economies cannot allow orgasmic satisfaction in labour, and that planning for the small nuclear family with large scale technology reproduces ever more complex and incompetent bureaucracies.

However, a third way could prevail. This would be an economy based upon co-operative communities which could provide an environment that encourages creative-orgasmic work, self-sufficiency in basic needs for food and shelter and a more efficient basis for local and national economic planning. I will argue that co-operative communities are not merely a way of life for an alternative fringe. They are necessary for our survival and happiness.

Orgasmic Labour

My term 'orgasmic-creative labour' may puzzle the reader. It is a new term that has grown out of recent research on co-operative group dynamics. The phrase 'labour of love' is often used to describe work that excites you and which you really desire to do. Both the work process and the end product bring pleasure to the worker. You enjoy the preparation stage. You put in a lot of energy. You have the joy of 'putting in the last brick'. The

Orgasmic Labour and National Economic Planning

labouring cycle and the loving cycle are two examples of a universal creative orgasmic process. Pleasure, energy in a particular form, and the production of something new indicate the presence of the cycle. 'The New' can be a real object like a baby or a house, an imaginary object, a relationship, a symbol, or a mathematical formula. Although the experience in relation to labour is very common, the conceptualisation of labour as 'orgasmic' is new.

When work is fully creative then a particular cycle takes place. It has four phases. First people *nurture* each other: this can be physical like when athletes 'limber up', or emotional like giving encouragement; or intellectual where facts and information are provided for the task. Second there is an *energising* phase where people 'get stuck in'; they push and pull the task along. Then an *orgasmic peak*; at this point people reach a peak of excitement: *Aha! Eureka! we've done it!*; in theatrical performances or concerts this is often the point for applause. Then a *relaxing* phase; tie up the loose ends, celebrate; cool it out. People now contemplate the task or the achievement; sometimes a more active relaxing phase takes place in the form of parties.

What is important as far as this article is concerned is the fact that some environments and situations encourage the orgasmic cycle to take place; others discourage the cycle or even make it quite impossible. One of my central arguments is that co-operative production encourages the cycle and most alternatives do not.

How To Have a Collective Orgasm

The first condition is that people share a *common desire*. People need to be excited about the task. The second is a safe environment for the production to take place. A third is that people have the knowledge skills and resources to perform the work. A fourth is that leadership and the division of labour can change according to the requirement of the orgasmic process: nurturing leaders come forward when they are needed and people allow themselves to nurture and to be nurtured; similarly with leadership in the energising and relaxing phases.

A fifth condition is that in order to experience a collective orgasm it is

necessary that all members be in contact with each other. If half the group are on holiday at the 'peak' then they cannot directly experience the orgasm. This usually means that the group has to be in face-to-face contact. But not always. Different people around the country have planned the Co-op Fair and only met a few times. We may all experience a 'peak' if the Fair is successful. Finally there is 'variety'. For example, it can be an orgasmic process to make your own bread once a week. Making bread all day in a bakery may become boring and unorgasmic.

Bureaucracy: the big turn-off

If we consider the six pre-conditions for orgasmic labour we can see how mass-bureaucratic organisation and production cannot fulfill a single one of them:

(i) shared desires are ruled out because the system is based upon forcing one group's desires on others (or by the similar mechanism of 'competition' —



(ii) The infinitely splintered division of labour splits planners from producers and makes each work role an isolated activity; nobody gets an environment which could facilitate orgasmic work cycles;

(iii) Knowledge skill and resources are commodities to be sold; skills and knowledge follow the same pattern as the splintering division of labour; you only know your specialist bit;

(iv) the leadership has to ensure that boring and repetitive processes are performed despite their alienating

effect; because motivation is lacking a whole host of bureaucrats are required to check and 'work study' every operation a worker does;

v) huge organisations with their many sub-divisions keep people out of personal contact with each other;

vi) the boredom and alienation of this kind of work situation is so well known that comment would be superfluous.

Clearly the bureaucratic-industrial structure cannot provide an environment for orgasmic labour. It seems fairly obvious that a small community of co-operatives could do so. Critics often argue that they will never be a basis for national production. There are several key arguments I have come across; they are examined below.

Can Co-ops Deliver The Goods?

A common objection is '*People don't want to be Hippies*' — usually followed by the implication that co-operative production, self-sufficiency, growing your own food, and AT are for middle class freaks who have not outgrown the 60's. Another objection runs '*Bureaucratic technology is indeed boring and alienating but it produces the goods — the gadgets that save labour*'. This leads to the third objection: '*The goods are produced by 'automation' leaving us more and more leisure; in this 'leisure' we can enjoy our creative-orgasmic labour*'.

Finally the argument is clinched by claiming that a complex industrial state cannot be planned, on a co-operative basis. The apologist for capitalism argues that only competing market forces can provide what people want. The apologist for bureaucratic socialism argues that the state planning apparatus and five year plans are the only alternative to capitalism or anarchy. But in the 1980's the bottom falls out of all these objections because of events in the world. The key event will be the collapse of imperialism.

For the last 100 years or so the ruling classes of the cold northern nations have made their desires for cheap fuel, foodstuffs and commodities prevail over the desires of people in the hot southern parts of the world. But no more. Iran is only the latest in a whole series of revolutions. And of course the fossil fuels are running out anyway.

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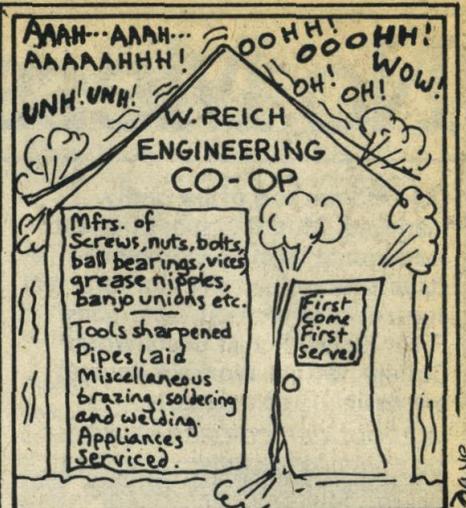
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Letter From A Dissident

A RUSSIAN comrade explains how the co-op movement can contribute to the building of socialism.

IT SEEMS to me that not enough attention is being paid to the co-operative movement in our country. Not everyone understands that now, since the time of the October Revolution, our co-operative movement has become one of great significance. There is a lot of fantasy in the dreams of the old co-operators. Often they are ridiculously fantastic. But why are they fantastic? Because people do not understand the fundamental, the rock-bottom significance of the working class political struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the exploiters. We have overthrown the rule of the exploiters, and much that was fantastic, even romantic, even banal in the dreams of the old co-operators is now becoming unvarnished reality.

Indeed, since political power is in the hands of the working class, since this political power owns all the means of production, the only task, indeed, that remains for us is to organise the population in co-operative societies. With most of the population organised in co-operatives, the socialism which in the past was legitimately treated with ridicule, scorn and contempt by those who were rightly convinced that it was necessary to wage the class struggle, the struggle for political power, etc., will achieve its aim automatically. But not all comrades realise how vastly, how infinitely important it is now to organise the population of Russia in co-operative societies.

Indeed, the power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the

proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc. — is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of co-operatives.

The Acceptable Face of Socialism

It is this very circumstance that is underestimated by many of our practical workers. They look down upon our co-operative societies, failing to appreciate their exceptional importance, first, from the standpoint of principle (the means of production are owned by the state) and, second, from the standpoint of transition to the new system by means that are the *simplest, easiest and most acceptable to the peasant*.

But this again is of fundamental importance. It is one thing to draw up fantastic plans for building socialism through all sort of workers' associations, and quite another to learn to build socialism in practice in such a way that every small peasant could take part in it.

We went too far when we introduced NEP (the New Economic Policy), but not because we attached too much importance to the principle of free enterprise and trade — we went too far because we lost sight of the co-operatives, because we now underrate the co-operatives, because we are already beginning to forget the vast importance of the co-operatives from the above two points of view.

I now propose to discuss with the reader what can and must at once be done practically on the basis of this 'co-operative' principle. By what means

can we, and must we, start at once to develop this 'co-operative' principle so that its socialist meaning may be clear to all?

Co-operation must be politically so organised that it will not only generally and always enjoy certain privileges, but that these privileges should be of a purely material nature (a favourable bank-rate, etc.)

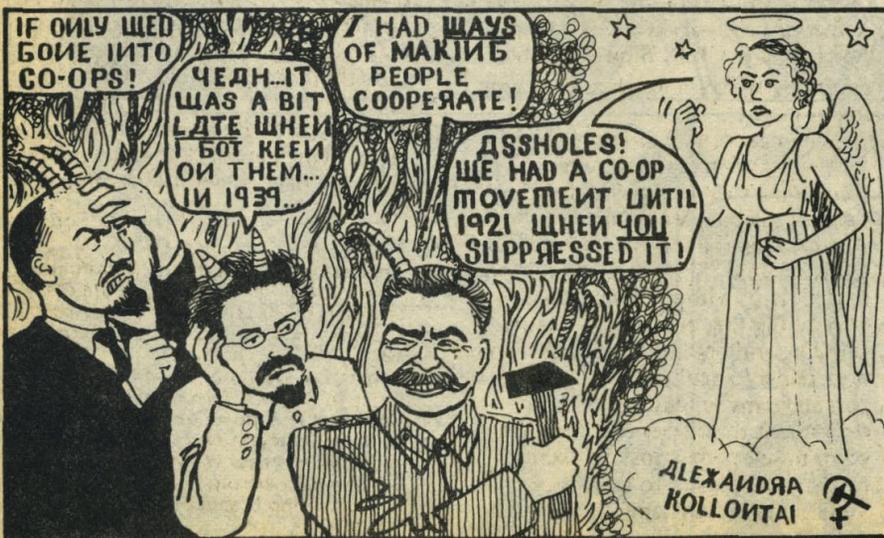
A social system emerges only if it has the financial backing of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of 'free' capitalism cost. At present we have to realise that the co-operative system is the social system we must now give more — than ordinary assistance, and we must actually give that assistance.

It is certainly a correct form of assistance to give a bonus to peasants who take part in co-operative trade; but the whole point is to verify the nature of this participation, to verify the awareness behind it, and to verify its quality. Strictly speaking, when a co-operator goes to a village and opens a co-operative store, the people take no part in this whatever; but at the same time guided by their own interests they will hasten to try to take part in it.

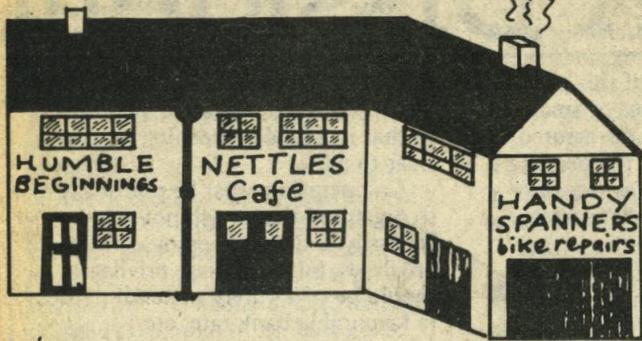
The thing now is to learn to combine the wide revolutionary range of action, the revolutionary enthusiasm which we have displayed, and displayed abundantly, and crowned with complete success — to learn to combine this with (I am almost inclined to say) the ability to be an efficient and capable trader, which is quite enough to be a good co-operator.

In conclusion; a number of economic, financial and banking privileges must be granted to the co-operatives — this is the way our socialist state must promote the new principle on which the population must be organised. But this is only the general outline of the task; it does not define and depict in detail the entire content of the practical task, i.e., we must find what form of 'bonus' to give for joining the co-operatives (and the terms on which we should give it), the form of bonus by which we shall assist the co-operatives sufficiently, the form of bonus that will produce the civilised co-operator. And given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism.

Vladimir Ilyanovitch Lenin



AN EVERYDAY STORY OF CO-OPERATIVE FOLK



Welcome to the local community workers co-operative complex...

In Humble Beginnings, our comrade, a wizard with micro-chips, plans for a prosperous future...



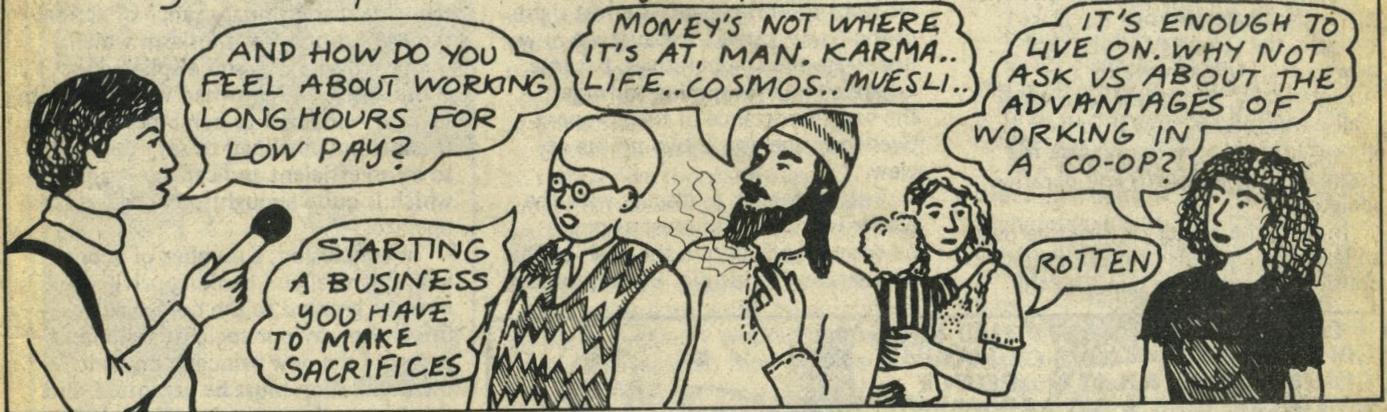
While in the cafe, "bread-making" means something else...



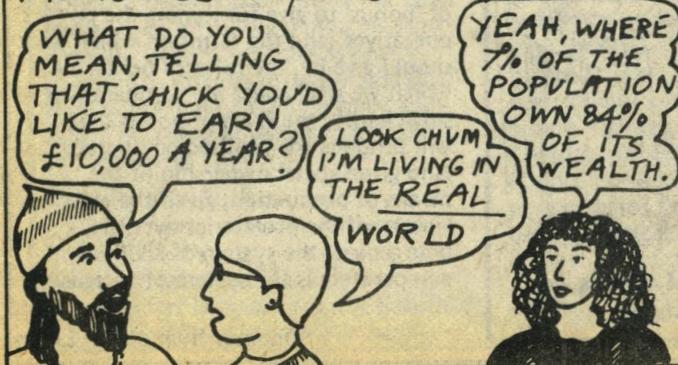
And in Handy Spanners, they're concerned with more practical matters...



One day the co-ops are visited by a reporter from the local paper...



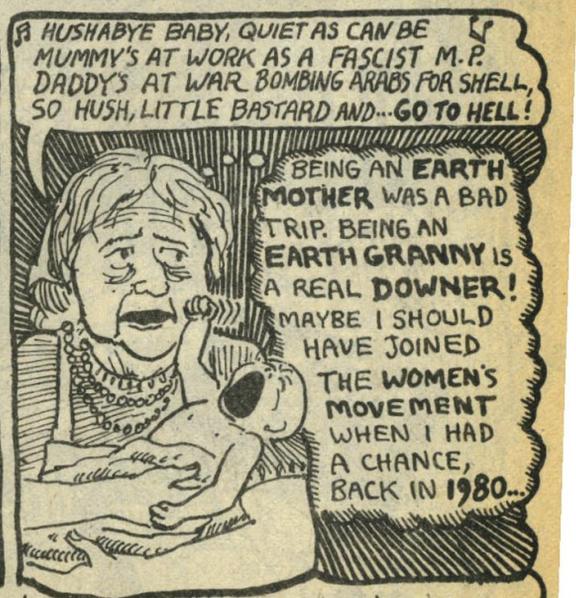
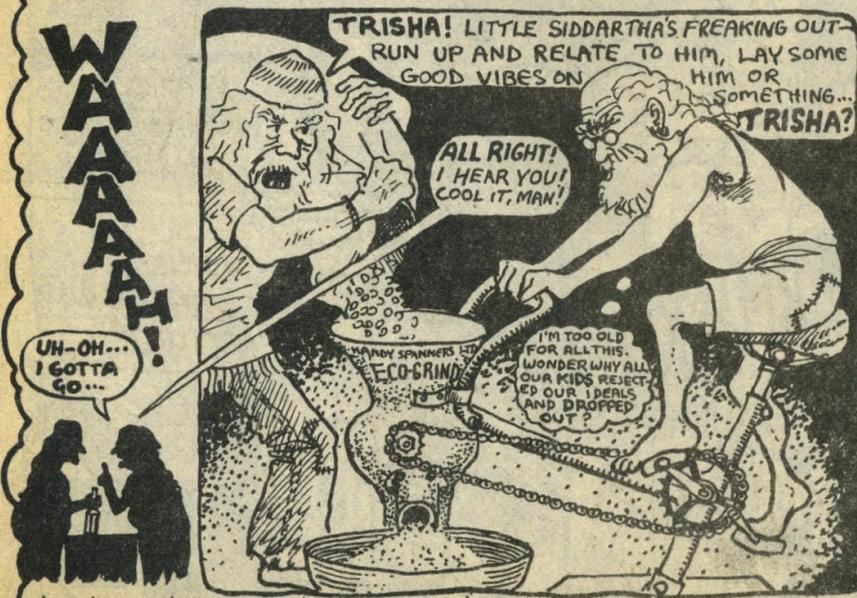
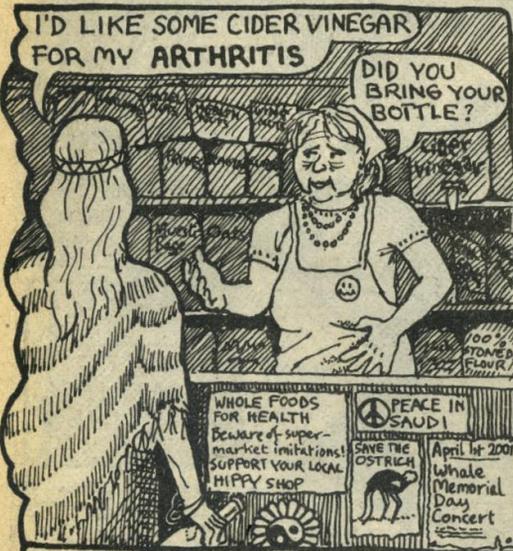
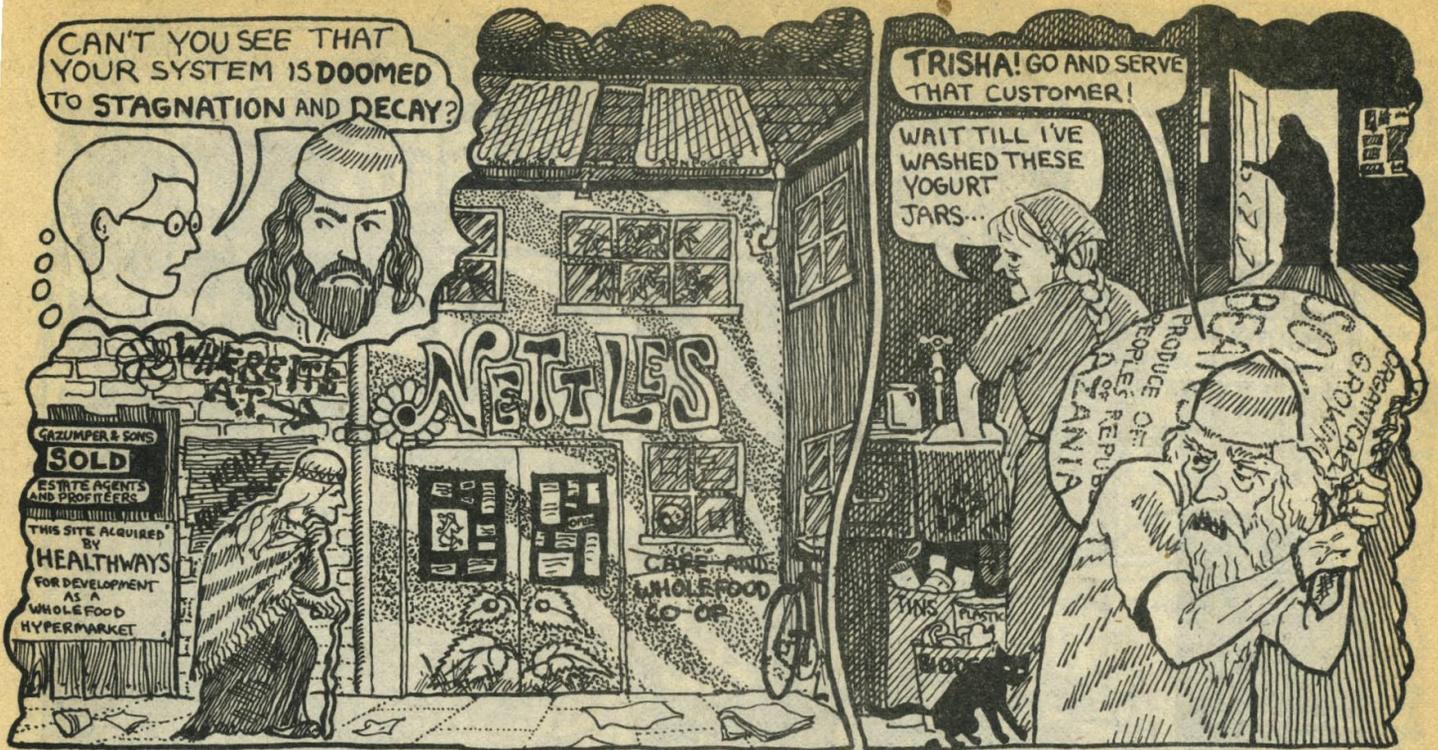
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WHOLE EARTH CO-OP



An Everyday Story of Co-operative Life was drawn by Ingrid Emsden, Dave Bygott and Dan Daum to a storyline devised by Dave Belden.

Macho-Nations

'OUR HOPE lies in a sense of community'. Daniel Ellsberg, the publisher of the notorious Pentagon Papers, talks to Robbie Brandwynne of our chances of averting nuclear annihilation.

LET ME give a sense of what the danger is in physical terms. I mentioned earlier that we launched an airborne alert in '61, in response to the supposed Russian predominance at that time. Many people in the Air Force and the Pentagon were very proud of the missile gap hoax. They said there was no other way they could get enough tax money for the necessary weapons to maintain our superiority — which was the real issue. They said, now we have the Minuteman missiles and the B52's. At worst we wasted money, Why worry about it?

The first thing that we did at the time was the airborne alert. As a result of the airborne alert bombs began dropping out of the sky on the United States. These planes were not built for continuous flying. They were very high-performance aircraft for thermonuclear weapons built to be used for one-round trip. They're not built to be used for days and days at a time as they were for the airborne alert. So fatigue problems began to set in, including pilot fatigue along with metal fatigue, and wings would fall off, engines would fall off, collisions occurred and the bombs would fall.

Now one I recall in particular, when I was at Rand, was on January 24th, 1961. A B52 crashed near its home base Seymour Johnson Air Force Base right near Goldsboro, North Carolina. In the course of crashing it dropped from the air one of its H-bombs, a 24 megaton weapon. It had six independent safety devices to keep it from exploding by accident. These devices are supposed to make it improbable that it should go off as being hit by a meteor in the city, if you've heard that analogy before. Five out of the six failed in the course of the fall and the crash. So one safety device protected it from a possible thermonuclear explosion. If it had gone off it would have released more explosive power than all the wars of human history — in this one bomb.

I think it is apparent from our discussion that the public has a massive denial going about nuclear realities. People are not hearing it.

Well, it's true. Yet in the first instance, it's ignorance, certainly. If you try to understand why there is that ignorance one must not underestimate the role of conscious deception and conscious concealment. These things have been kept very, very secret. When I talk to audiences, after Vietnam, Watergate, and the CIA revelations, I don't encounter much intellectual resistance on these points — even though it's completely new to them. On the contrary, people in the public find it both possible to believe this pretty fast — out of the blue — and very disturbing. And they react in a way that's very encouraging to me; a lot of them start getting very active. I'm convinced that it's mistaken to say that they're so apathetic, but that really they are ignorant first of the scale of the threat and more importantly of the possibility of doing anything about it.

Let me go just a little bit further on a question you raised earlier — how did we get this way? I think very plausibly you have to say that this pattern of imperial behaviour or of great power bullying, both of its own people and of neighbours, and other people in the world

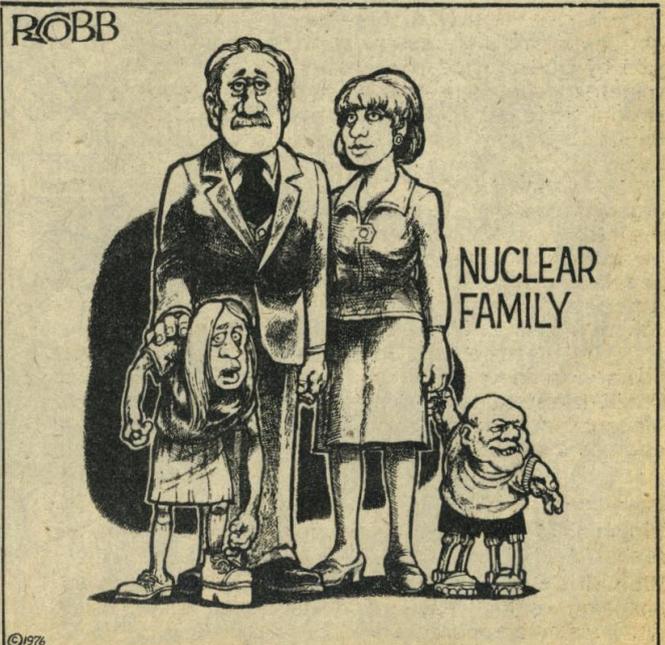
— goes back as far as cities: It is as old as civilisation, as it is usually defined, in terms of cities, irrigation, agriculture, writing: and along with these, slavery, heavy sexism, racism, imperialism, empire, kings, priests, armies and major inequality — a package which the anthropologist Stanley Diamond calls 'civilisation'. All of these things come pretty much at once with the big surpluses that you get from irrigated-field agriculture. All these other brutalising phenomena, the impersonal destruction and the authoritarian regimes come with them. They don't characterise every part of the world at the same time. But ever since the appearance of cities, for five-thousand years or so, there have been these phenomena in the world.

I think the machismo factor is an important element. Out of this same pattern of behaviour in which centralised power is held by men, grew male-culture, the aggressiveness, the rivalry, the competitiveness, the willingness to contemplate massive, destructive or constructive works — for impersonal causes and abstract causes. 'Winning', the most abstract cause of all, is part of our socialisation in modern times, and that is primarily a male phenomenon. It would seem that this whole pattern has to be confronted and somehow changed.

I can't really believe that life can persist very long with the level of nuclear weapons and the dispersal of them that we have now achieved. That has to change. This is not a status quo that can be lived with or for long, lived in.

Our problem then is to reverse five thousand years of imperial culture, patriarchal culture based on warfare and some twenty-five years of thermonuclear weapons. That's the problem.

I think that our hope lies in a sense of community, both in a conscious sense and a latent readily available sense. The sense of a broad community with other life, with other humans and with the environment as a whole is much more present in the mass of the public than it is in that relatively small number of middle-aged



men who manage all societies: men who have fought for and achieved positions of immense coercive power that distances their concerns from the concerns of most people, and who see most people somewhat abstractly and subject to manipulation and to destruction as well.

We haven't really talked much about one final point I think I should mention. There is a sex difference in attitudes on these things, both of the nature of community, the importance of community and values in general. The difference is between men and women in the large, though not between every individual. It seems that the forms of thought which are most valued, most highly paid and most useful to power structures are forms of thought that men have been trained to excel in. Whereas the intuitive caring for life that is born of women, and for other forms of life, by analogy, comes more easily to women. Women are not all mothers and don't all want to be mothers, but unlike the men who also came from mothers, they are encouraged to identify with mothers. A complicated thing, but though we all have mothers, the idea of mothering is something that men are trained to put behind them at an early age.

Now, I'm not saying women as the guardians of the spirit of concern for life must limit themselves to that. But I am saying that there is a good deal of empirical evidence that right now attitudes questioning the state's purposes and especially questioning the necessity for wars and winning are shown, by polls, to be more common to women. But that doesn't mean that they act democratically on those values. (In the case of Vietnam that happened also to be true of blacks compared to whites, perhaps because, like women, blacks were not so inclined to accept as true and necessary the statements of white, middle class males.)

I think you put your finger on a really important point. Men are raised to put nurturing behind them and that's the break at which the hierarchical power, game oriented kind of personality moves away from the caring-for kind of personality.

A lot of feminists that I've met as individuals are very uneasy or even hostile if you point to something like this, because they regard this kind of woman's trait as a way

'Our problem is to reverse five thousand years of imperial culture and some twenty-five years of thermonuclear weapons.'

of keeping them in a less valued kind of orientation or attitude, discouraging them from acquiring the skills, analytical thinking and aggressive competitiveness that they need to acquire power to account for more in the world. But even though it suggests a trait associated with an inferior power position it nevertheless has something to recommend it. It is regarded as a way of keeping people in oppression: I understand that in terms of the immediate context. But it has a long run context as well. I think it has to be recognised first, that this more favoured, 'male' way of thinking and acting, to which the President appears when he warns us against being a pitiful, helpful giant, is an attitude that does make for getting ahead — not just in U.S. or capitalist society, but in most centralised, industrialised, urbanized societies. And, second, it's going to kill us all. I think that what we're facing now is the truth in the assumption in Jefferson's time, that a country as large and centralised as ours now can't remain a true republic. And it is also true that we should achieve democratic self-government.

So where do you go from here? I certainly want to see explored the possibility of great decentralisation, great de-emphasis on national institutions as opposed to federated regional and local institutions. And a much greater sense that other nationals are not to be burned boiled or shredded any more than we think it is appropriate for our own nationals to be cannibalized.

The full text of this interview was first published in the January issue of the *Yodeller*, the newspaper of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club. It was reprinted in the February number of *Not Man Apart*, the newspaper of the US Friends of the Earth (\$15 pa. from 124 Spear St, San Francisco, CA 94105). We can supply a xerox of the complete interview on request.

UNA INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

Volunteers needed for third world work

Do you have the skills that are needed in the third world? And the capacity to pass them on to others? By working side by side with peasant farmers and the urban poor, volunteers can make a small but real contribution to their struggle for a decent life and a just society. On return to Britain, volunteers' experience can help to raise awareness here.

UNA International Service takes the trouble to find organisations in the third world which are really working in the interests of the poor, and to recruit volunteers who will be useful to them. It seeks mature and experienced people who are prepared to work for two or three years on a modest allowance. Language ability is essential as the volunteers all go to non-English speaking countries.

UNA International Service is currently recruiting for posts in francophone West Africa, the Middle East and Brazil. It also has programmes in Bolivia, Paraguay and Madagascar, and may soon be recruiting agricultural engineers and EFL teachers.

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Field Officer to develop and administer the volunteer programme. Overseas experience and fluency in French required.

Woman Co-operative Administrator to help Bambara-speaking women weavers to develop their rug workshop into a viable co-operative.

Mechanic to give on-the-job training in maintenance and repair of diesel lorries and landrovers.

UPPER VOLTA

Rural Engineer to help villagers improve water supplies and irrigation.

MIDDLE EAST

Lawyer/Legal Worker to work in a Palestinian law centre and carry out legal research and law reporting.

BRAZIL

Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and Technical Instructor to work in a rehabilitation centre for physically disabled, mentally retarded and disturbed socially marginalised people in Sao Paulo state.

Nurse to treat lepers as in- and out-patients and train local staff in Amazonia.

UNA International Service is a department of the United Nations Association of Great Britain, whose 20,000 members up and down the country work to promote peace, understanding between peoples, and to give critical support to the United Nations Organisation. Like VSO, IVS and CIIR, UNAIS is an independent agency part-funded by the Overseas Development Administration of the British government.

For more information about UNA, UNA International Service and the above posts, contact UNAIS, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL (01-930 0679).

Can Capitalism Co-opt Co-ops?

CO-OPS are becoming trendy. All sorts of strange (but powerful) people are pronouncing in favour of them. Dave Belden has been asking around to try and see behind some of the Establishment figures' new found interest in co-ops. What can they have in mind? Not co-option of the idea for other purposes, surely?

THE INTEREST of Tony Benn in co-ops is well known. His message to the Co-ops Fair is a welcome expression of it. As Industry Minister in 1974-5 he helped workers' sit ins set up co-ops at Meriden, KME and Scottish Daily News. There is every reason to expect that he will do more still and, with the experience of those three struggles against the odds behind him, do it more effectively next time around. The fact that as Minister of Technology earlier he had encouraged capitalist mergers (such as that which led to GEC) encouraging the concentration of power in fewer hands should not worry us overmuch. His conversion, we have to believe, is real.

More surprising is the conversion of the Labour right wing and of the Liberals to co-ops. And a strange air of unreality wafts in when one considers that one of Triumph Meriden's main backers has been none other than Sir Arnold Weinstock, the hard driving capitalist architect of the GEC merger himself. Tories have spoken in the House of Commons in favour of co-ops.

Tories for workers control? Or is workers control not precisely what they have in mind? Co-ops appeal for various reasons to all these ideological positions. A quick round up can help explain why.

'A fiscal revolution'

The Labour Right: Shirley Williams and David Owen have both recently spoken publicly in favour of co-ops. Addressing the ICOM Spring Conference this March Owen called for 'a fiscal revolution, the introduction of a co-operative budget that takes as its central objective the promotion of industrial co-operatives and is openly and unashamedly discriminatory'. A Labour Government in 1984 dedicated to co-ops could quadruple their numbers to at least 2,000 enterprises, he predicted.

To counter the Labour Left's call for more nationalisation, the Labour Right is latching onto the idea of co-ops as a middle way. For instance Owen suggested 'a major stimulus to building co-operatives' as an alternative to nationalising the building industry. He foresaw an expanding 'co-operative sector' between the necessary private and public sectors.

The Labour Left: One hears proposals here that would scare the daylight out of the building industry as much if not more than nationalisation would. A serious proposal has been made that workers in medium sized firms (say 50-500 employees) should

be given the statutory right to turn their firm into a co-op, with a loan from the government. John Tilley, Co-op Party MP, suggested to me that this made a nice parallel with Tory sales of Council houses — Labour offering workers too 'the right to buy'.

Tilley serves on a Labour Party working group on co-operatives, set up as a sub-committee of the Industrial Policy Committee. It is preparing a report on co-ops to make to the 1981 party conference. The group is left of centre, including left MPs Stuart Holland and Bob Cryer, another Co-op Party MP (Jim Graigen), and representatives from ICOM, the CDA, the TUC, SERA, the retail Co-ops, under MP Les Huckfield in the chair. It can be expected to come up with fairly radical proposals, though whether the Party chooses them or Owen's milk and water suggestions depends on whether the left as a whole gains power in the party.

The Mondragon model

The Liberals: The spectre of a left wing takeover of the Labour Party has revived ideas of a Centre Party recently. If the Liberals take part in this, or if we have another Lib/Lab coalition, a certain view of co-ops may get major publicity and perhaps political muscle.

This view was expressed succinctly by Jo Grimmond MP in a speech to the Scottish Co-operatives Development Committee in Glasgow this February. It is based on the model of the Mondragon co-ops in Spain's Basque country. The Mondragon co-ops employ 16,000 people in industries which include a foundry, textiles, electric cookers and washing machines (they are Spain's largest producers of both these), services and electronics. Grimmond stressed two points: the requirement that workers invest between £1000 and £2000 in the co-op on joining; and the central role of the co-operative bank which allows new co-ops to start only when they have passed a stringent financial examination and are employing approved management.

If the Liberals gain influence the same requirements would be made for co-ops in this country to gain state aid or recognition. Grimmond explained the politics behind this. He rejected nationalisation as a complete failure, and praised 'free enterprise and competition' which 'history shows' is the best way to run the economy. He castigated the unions for wanting higher wages without more productivity. 'It is a tragedy', he said,

Message from Tony Benn to the Co-ops Fair 1980.

"THE co-operative movement is coming into its own, partly because of the growing dissatisfaction with centralised and multinational power, partly because of a feeling that decisions should be rooted nearer the place of work, and partly because profit has come to seem an inadequate guide for production for social use.

'The development of co-ops in the '70s holds out real prospects of expansion in the '80s, although of course there are problems of marketing and production in an atmosphere of hostility from a conventional business world. A co-operative trading exchange arrangement was going in the 1930s, and the Co-op Fair should be of help in furthering a similar development today.

'The experience of the last few years has convinced the Labour Party at every level that a really big push to encourage and assist co-operatives must be forthcoming from the next Labour Government, and we will have to secure an absolutely copper bottomed guarantee that this will happen, which is of course why party democracy is so important.

'that the workers should not be involved in promoting the efficiency of the industries in which they make their living'. His answer is to engage the workers fully in free enterprise capitalism by making them the new capitalists.

The main brains behind this view of co-ops is Robert Oakeshott, one time ICOM enthusiast and a founder of the Sunderlandia building co-op. He now runs Job Opportunities Ltd (JOL), a pressure group and advisory body to promote the Mondragon version of co-ops.

No Mondragon style co-ops have been started here yet, but Oakeshott has high hopes. If the *Times* journalists had bought the paper off Thompson, JOL's report for them would have been involved. A large oil company, worried about the way its road tanker drivers could hold a pistol to its head if they were dissatisfied, has suggested the drivers taking over their part of the business as a co-op. A company employing 800 workers owned by 'an eccentric and rather admirable Jew who doesn't want his sons to inherit' may be turned into a co-op. The owner is encouraged in his plan by his belief that 'there is a little bit of the capitalist in the ordinary working people', (Oakeshott).

The small business sector

The Tories: This echoes a pertinent comment made to John Tilley by the

leader of Wandsworth Council Tories after they had supported the Labour Council's first measures to help co-ops. Tilley, then leader of the Labour Council, asked his Tory opposite number why they did not oppose worker ownership. The Tory replied that he considered co-ops 'the quickest way of turning working men into capitalists that's ever been invented'.

The Tories did not oppose the last Labour Government's bill to set up the Co-operatives Development Agency.

Sir Keith Joseph told the CDA Chairman and Director in an interview reported in CDA's January newsletter that he 'regarded industrial co-operatives as a desirable expression of private enterprise', as long as they did not ask for government money.

The thinking here is less the Labour right and Liberals' attempt to gain the workers' enthusiastic involvement in capitalism, than a desire to further the small business sector. Small businesses are in fashion, not just because our large ones are collapsing, but because of theories that multi-

nationals depend on small businesses to run difficult areas that they are too big to do efficiently; and they also require them to make innovations which the big firms can later co-opt. For instance, let small groups of enthusiasts like Northumbrian Energy Workshop develop windmill technology, or solar panels, let them iron out the problems, and then move in. The same may well go for supermarkets moving into wholefoods now that small co-ops have shown that there is a real market for them. Will the breweries move into real ale off licences before the Leeds Beer Co-op has inspired co-ops in every town in the country to follow their present successful example?

Tony Eccles, Professor of the London Business School whose book on the KME co-op comes out next year, indicated a more sinister Tory interest in co-ops. Nicholas Ridley, right wing Tory MP, in 1978 embarrassed his own party with a secret report on how to run the industries after denationalisation . . . including the use of co-ops.

Born again Capitalism

Arnold Weinstock and others: Arnold Weinstock and Ian Fraser (Rolls Royce) both attended a JOL function last year. 'At least it shows they don't reject this thing as the work of an insurrectionary movement, what?' Oakeshott said. Both he and Eccles

'Tories for workers' control? Or is workers' control not precisely what they have in mind?'



thought that Weinstock's interest in co-ops reflected the pragmatic manager's desire to see enterprises run smoothly. 'Anyone who's interested in seeing industry work well would investigate the alternatives', said Oakeshott.

Another enthusiast for co-ops is hard to place in the political spectrum at the moment. Peter Jay, Callaghan's ambassador to Washington, and one time economics expert on the *Times*, has frequently written in favour of worker ownership, in spite of his conversion to Friedmanite monetarism. The summary of his 'Employment, Inflation and Politics', Wincott Lecture 1975, says: 'The inflationary influence of collective bargaining can be removed only by offering working people a better protection than national trade unions.

The only potentially acceptable alternative is a change in company law which gives ownership and ultimate control of enterprises to the people employed by them. They would then have to take risks in a market environment'. Jay talks about 'market socialism'. So did Owen in his ICOM speech. How do the two connect?

It is not hard to see in a vision of the year 2000 a born again capitalism which has found that renewable energy sources can replace oil and that workers can be trusted to participate in free enterprise if only they are trusted with the excitement of ownership and responsibility as well as part of the spoils. Britain could pioneer this worker capitalism and reattract American and Japanese capital to these shores, assuring a

good return on investment. Long live capitalism.

I asked Jenny Thornley, researcher with the Centre for Environmental Studies whose book on co-ops is coming out soon, whether she thought capitalism could take over co-operatives. She was reassuring. 'It's not easy to co-opt co-ops', she said. She criticised co-ops in fact for being so suspicious towards everybody that they cannot even accept help, let alone be co-opted by, groups who could help them — including the national CDA and the retail Co-op Movement, the Labour left and the trade unions. 'Co-ops have no common strategy for changing society', she said, but she believes they could find allies if they set about it. There is hope yet.

Dave Belden

A Strong Voice Of Our Own

CO-OPERATORS above all don't want other people muscling in on their scene. But others — Government, politicians, banks, pressure groups — inevitably will. What can co-ops do to protect their own interests and to promote real workers' co-ops? Dave Belden looks at strategies open to co-ops, from CDAs to Federations.

IT IS EASY, particularly after reading the last article, not to mention the two nightmares in the centre spread cartoons, to imagine doom laden futures for co-ops.

As bad as the Tories' neglect would be a Lib Lab or Centre Party Government's interest, which would transform the co-op movement into a new and revived form of capitalism.

Either way co-ops would find events concerning their own future going swiftly beyond their control. The new workers co-ops of the last few years have not yet had to do anything for themselves politically. They have been helped enormously by the work of ICOM (how many co-ops would there be today without ICOM's model rules). Two Acts of Parliament in 1976 and 1978 have established the principle at least of Government money for funding and advising co-ops. The Co-op Bank has started to lend to co-ops. Local Councils have started to set up co-ops.

But all of this has been done with minimal participation by co-ops them-

selves. It has depended upon the lobbying of a handful of enthusiasts from ICOM and the retail Co-op Movement. This has been a thoroughly 'top down' way of proceeding. A few leaders (despised word, but the fact exists nonetheless) at the top have done a great deal to make the new wave of co-operation possible.

Co-ops should be unhappy about this for practical as well as philosophical reasons. If the 'leaders' like ICOM get removed by Tory benign neglect or swamped by Liberal interest how are co-ops to promote themselves, unused as they are to taking responsibility to do so?

Strong voice of their own

It surely is clear that the only way for workers co-ops to acquire a strong voice of their own is for them to form their own strong democratic associations. Bodies in which co-ops co-operate fully, instead of leaving it to the leaders.

There are three contenders for this role: ICOM itself, the local CDAs, and trade associations or federations of co-ops.

1) *ICOM* It is sometimes argued that ICOM can never represent all co-ops because its definition of co-op is too narrow (e.g. apart from insisting that the workers actually own the firm it also requires that the co-op members cannot profit personally from selling the

firm). I am not personally convinced that this narrowness is a bad thing: it is all too easy to dilute the concept of worker ownership.

If, as seems likely, only about two thirds or a half of workers co-ops in Britain actually belong to ICOM, the reason lies more in their own failure to join, than in ICOM's rejecting them. This apathy presumably stems from two causes. One, after registering co-ops see no further *material* benefit in staying in ICOM, so they allow their membership to lapse.

Two, they do not see any political value in supporting ICOM, either because they have no concept of being involved however tenuously in helping a co-op 'movement' to grow, or because they do not understand ICOM's role as a pressure group at Westminster and the important co-op issues that might or might not get decided there. This can either stem from a conservative 'business is business and nothing to do with politics' view, or from an anarchist rejection of parliamentary politics.

A recent AGM of ICOM's at Leeds was actually inquisitorial. Perhaps the illuminating tendency of some ICOM enthusiasts to call their organisation 'apolitical' has much to answer for in this. Perhaps ICOM needs to do a lot more to involve its membership in the undoubtedly political work that it undertakes. But maybe any central association of co-ops is going to find it hard to inspire much dedicated participation. Regional or trade associations might do better.

2) *Trade Associations*. The main current example of this is the Federation of Alternative Booksellers. But the most exciting example was surely the Federation of Northern Wholefoods Collectives (FNWC).

Today practically every town seems to have its alternative wholefood store.

Back in 1974 at their first national meeting there were only a handful, and they talked mainly about the purity of food. The next year, though, wholefood shops in the North came together to support a warehouse, Suma, and a federation which aimed among other things 'to change the world's economic and social structure'. There was much mirth at a conference last December when one of the authors of this idealistic document read it out to fellow co-operators, older and wiser than we now are. But it is important to remember that Suma and the FNWC were set up with political as well as trading objectives.

Huge unstructured meetings

There were material incentives to join the NWC (later FNWC — see article by Suma workers), namely a discount on food supplied by Suma. And although a shop was supposed to be a *bona fide* co-op to join, all small 'alternative' wholefood shops were accepted even when not legally co-ops. Wholefood shops were easy to set up with little capital and a ready market. So the FNWC grew very quickly to over 40 shops.

In the first flush of setting up shops FNWC people were reacting against structured work of any sort. They did not want FNWC to be too structured either: there was no representation, every co-op worker being free to attend meetings, at which decisions had to be by consensus. Soon the regular meetings (sometimes every six weeks) became huge, very long, repetitious and exhausting.

The FNWC put a levy of 1% on food sold by each shop. This would have raised £7,000 a year. Some was raised and a loan made to a wholefood restaurant in York — which went bust. It seems to have been largely the impossibility of making sensible decisions about this money at the huge unstructured meetings which led to the splitting up of the FNWC into regional groups in March 1978. Low powered local meetings continue. But as a social and political force the FNWC is asleep.

It is quite possible that it will be revived in some form. The excitement of the FNWC for me, working as I was then in a wholefood shop in the South (the Federation of Southern Wholefood Collectives had not got off the ground then and is still quite small) was the way it was mixing politics with successful business. As a group the FNWC would have had considerable buying power and collateral.

At the same time the FNWC had set up an educational and political campaigning wing called CENA. With others like Uhuru in Oxford

and the BSSRS Agricapital Group this was publicising issues in food politics.

The Tyranny of Structurelessness

Between them the FNWC and CENA could have been a powerful grass roots association, able to help co-ops expand and make their views heard to the public, the Labour Movement and government. Perhaps they will be again in a new form. The experience of Suma workers, described in another article, suggests that structure is not the dirty word it once was. Many people have heard of, and felt a resonance with, the pamphlet from the Womens Movement in the States called 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness'. The example of Fair Ground (see *Undercurrents* 39) the 'maxi co-op' or virtual building society set up by a number of communes suggests that some alternative groups are becoming confident enough to handle very difficult legal structures without fearing loss of autonomy; Fair Ground will own the property of these communes as a way of raising collective collateral on a large scale. The Federation of Alternative Booksellers has been more structured from the start, with a part-time paid co-ordinator, delegate meetings, clear decisions.

A small but interesting example of an alternative trade association's influence was the case of FAB and the book 'Fat is a Feminist Issue'. This was published by Hamlyn with a sexist cover which contradicted the message of the book. FAB put their own cover on the book as a protest, and within two months Hamlyn had changed to use a very similar cover. Trade associations can get results.

'... co-ops are about changing society as well as making a self-managed niche for ourselves.'

3) *Local CDAs*. Not all co-ops are in a field with enough colleagues to form a trade federation. Printing co-ops could, but Computer Craft or Northumbrian Energy Workshop could not (yet). The best way to group together for such co-ops is probably therefore on a regional basis in a local Co-operative Development Agency.

Attendance at the first national conference for CDA workers in Leeds in March revealed that there were active CDAs with voluntary or full time paid workers in West Glamorgan, North Wales, N. Ireland, Scotland, England's North East, West Yorkshire,

East Midlands, Devon and Cornwall, and the London boroughs of Hackney and Islington. Views on the politics and nature of co-ops differed widely.

Whether the local CDAs come to be run by local 'interests' or by local co-ops will depend considerably on how much interest local co-ops take in them. They could be very important in stimulating new co-ops and getting local government support. The studies by national CDA officers for the London Councils of Lewisham and Lambeth identifying co-operative potential could well be copied by many local authorities. Manchester City Council invited the CDA to hold a one-day conference in the town hall for Councils all over the country to come and hear about co-ops, in mid June.

Beyond the fragments

The purpose of this and the previous article is not to provide answers but to show that there are questions, opportunities, dangers for co-ops of which they may not be aware. In the last few years during which the number of co-ops has grown so dramatically there has been very little widespread discussion in print or in meetings about the future road to a co-operative society. This is a lot healthier than the opposite — all talk and no creation. From my own experience of wholefoods and building co-ops I know that work in a co-op can leave little energy for political work outside it; co-ops can be exhausting. (Perhaps I am only writing these articles because a year's illness and a desire to write a book means I am not at present working in a co-op).

But co-ops *are* about changing society as well as about making a self managed niche for ourselves. If we don't act together even that niche may become precarious. If we do there may be exciting things we can do together, ways of impacting and struggling with the nuclear armed, monopoly ridden, male run, polluting, alienating, imperialist profit mad society in which we happen to find ourselves.

Co-ops acting together can do two things: first build the practical co-operative networks that will secure finance, advice and practical services, including things like a new bank if necessary; second, have a political impact on local and central government, the political parties, the banks and surrounding capitalist firms, the trade unions above all and the old Co-op movement: both to lobby for co-ops' immediate interests and to join with other 'fragments' of political struggle to push towards a more co-operative society.

Dave Belden

and provides information on co-operatives which are launching themselves, or about to be launched, and are looking for assistance or new members. To date directories have been published annually and in some years supplements have appeared.

The Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies reports on his duties in relation to Industrial and Provident Societies in part three of his Annual Report. Apart from giving a brief account of the state of the game it also contains many useful statistical tables with modern and retrospective information included.

The 1978 *Directory of Housing Co-ops* produced by the late Co-operative Housing Agency, as yet not superseded, is still useful though getting increasingly dated. The Education Department of the Co-operative Union produced two sets of notes giving information, addresses and bibliographies on workers co-operatives and housing co-operatives.

Studies and Appraisals

A number of studies and/or appraisals have appeared, the most well known of which have been focussed on the co-operatives of the Mondragon region in Spain. *Worker Owners* a report published by the Anglo German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society, in 1977, put Mondragon on the map by causing widespread interest.

1977 also saw the publication of a survey of contemporary British worker co-operatives by Paul Chaplin and Roger Cowe. As an impartial study this is well worth attention. The survey was of 24 existing co-operatives and five which were being planned. The authors conclude that 'the problems of setting up a co-operative enterprise are no different from those encountered in establishing a conventional small business: finding the money and getting premises from which to operate. Also the sources of finance for the co-operatives was very much the same, being personal savings and bank loans'.

Paul Chaplin is now a leading member of the Open University's Co-operatives Research Unit which was formed in 1978 to consolidate and provide a framework for developing research into co-operatives as well as providing advice, information and training aids. A number of impressive series of Occasional Papers, Case Studies and Monographs have been started.

This tremendous growth of interest in co-operative enterprise and in the volume of literature on the subject is to be welcomed. The bigger and better the co-operative sector in Britain the happier I will be. But reading through this literature day in and day out the one thing that concerns me is that no-one seems to be thinking about where we are going, i.e. what the horizon is and what, at the end of the day, is the ultimate objective of all this co-operative activity. I believe that the ultimate objective is the establishment of a Co-operative Commonwealth and instead of complaining about this gap I have been busy writing a pamphlet to fill it.

Peter Clarke

For lack of space we had to make some Procrustean cuts to Peter Clarke's review article; we hope he will forgive us: we didn't realise how vast the co-op lit is! We have, however, printed his bibliography complete and unabridged.

REVIEWS

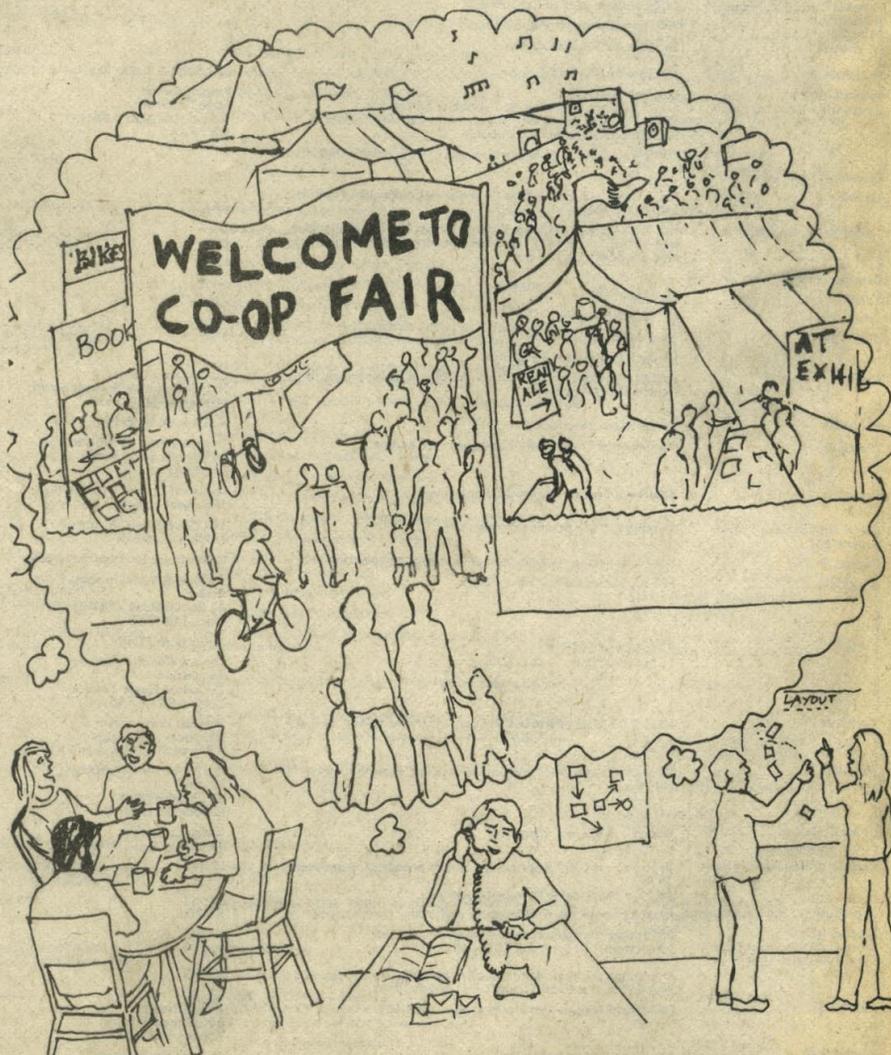
Unconscious collective

Co-operative and Community Group Dynamics — or your meetings needn't be so appalling. Rosemary Randall, John Southgate and Frances Tomlinson. Barefoot Books. 1980 56pp. £1.50. Available from PDC outlets or from the publishers at 12 Nassington Road, NW3 at cover price + 30p p&p.

I GUESS we get into co-operative group working for all sorts of individ-

ual reasons. Idealism and choice, also necessity and harsh reality. And then at some stage we have to think out what the hell we are doing, both individually and as a group. These cartoons are an attempt to explore the kinds of issues that bring people to realise their need for some kind of self-examination, and to demonstrate ways they can build on their commitment to working and living co-operatively.

The key to any interaction, whether it's between two people or in a group or organisation is DESIRE. The first question to ask when looking at a group is - "What do its members desire?"



Sometimes it's easy to see. Everyone shares the same desire. It's obvious how to achieve it. People work together in a way they find pleasurable in order to achieve their shared desire.

John Southgate and Rosemary Randall have put together in cartoon form their direct experiences of working with co-ops in understanding their dynamics, while drawing what they want in the way of theory from Paulo Freire, Wilhelm Reich and Wilfred Bion among others. What Freire, Reich or Bion would think of the use made of their work is anybody's guess; what matters to potential users of the book is its ability to make sense to them.

The authors have used cartoons before in their research and consultancy. Frances Tomlinson has done the drawings, and together they have developed a style that is simple without being banal. *The Barefoot Psychoanalyst* is at an individual level a forerunner of this manual of co-operative group dynamics.

I was a member of a workshop John and Rosemary have just done at North London Polytechnic. They used some of the cartoons during the workshop; the usual format was to discuss the cartoons, then to get into some experiential exercise, and then to run out of time for further discussion, which spilled over into the pub. So I have a feel of how they try to resolve the dilemma of being the custodians of conventional (or unconventional) wisdom, and at the same time provoking others to focus their own thought and feeling into creative action. The cartoons in the book give much of the same feel, encouraging to those who want to take risks.

The approach is constructive, with an emphasis on what is good in group working, without seeing all aspects of the group as problematic and destructive. The workshop loved the idea of the creative orgasmic cycle. This may have had as much to do with our private desires as our dedication to the official Desire of the group. But it is impossible to ignore the negative aspects: the cartoons also bring these to life, so that we can laugh even as we slip on the banana skin.

The workshop exercises seemed to expose a process of exponential complexity. Questioning leads more naturally to more questions than to answers. As the group developed its own life, the participants did not rebel at the challenge of the material but sought to live with complexity rather than close down options.

Perhaps it is a paradox of the cartoons that their apparent simplicity encourages us to take account of our own private sub-text to the headlines, while a more detailed analytic account would leave us screaming for simple answers. A bonus is the sense of fun that need not be lost when we take ourselves seriously.

John and Rosemary have taken on an essential task in describing the underlying unconscious processes that shape any group experience. They have done it without losing touch with what is on the surface, so their approach should not immediately frighten off those who do not easily accept that we are influenced in our actions and reactions by our own unconscious desires and defences. One can recognise from their examples that they are talking about.

Their own orientation is encouraging; they are looking to turn these processes to positive use; they do, however tend to idealise the creative group. For example, they use Bion's account of basic assumption behaviour with reference to a destructive group, while he would have seen this as characteristic of all small groups. In such ways they may leave others feeling envious or disbelieving in their own energising capacities.

Those working co-operatively have to achieve and maintain and readjust a balance of reflection and action. These cartoons demonstrate a way of exploring the connections — and anyone can join in.

Tim Dartington

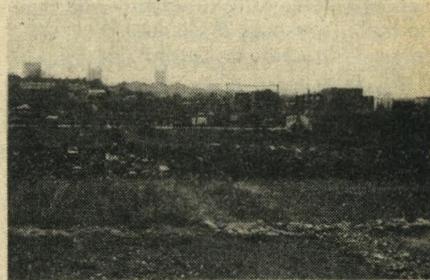
Commoners crowned

Britain's First Socialists — by Fenner Brockway, Introduction by Tony Benn. Quartet Books £5.95.

THIS IS a good book. The fact that it was written by a man of over 90 makes it remarkable. For, while it is not a work of first hand research (as the author freely admits in his introduction) it is a lively and interesting account, full of insights for the general reader, of the ideas and actions of Britain's First Socialists — the Levellers, Diggers and Agitators of the English Revolution.

Perhaps the main quibble with the book is the title. It certainly leaves it open to the accusation of reading history backwards, calling the great 17th century revolutionaries socialists. The Levellers were much more forerunners of liberalism than socialism, if they anticipated any important thread of political thought (and the modern nature of much of their thought is well brought out by Brockway). Liberalism's greatest triumph, the American Declaration of Independence — 'we hold these truths to be self-evident . . .'

is remarkably similar to 'These things we declare to be our native rights . . .' (Leveller *Agreement of the People*, 1647). The native rights they claimed in 1647 were such things as freedom of conscience, freedom from military



Diggers today service, equality before the law — a liberal programme with no mention of redistribution of income or for that matter of common ownership. The Diggers may fall into a different category, but the book concentrates overwhelmingly (and rightly, in view of their relative importance at the time) on the Levellers, and to describe them as socialists is in a sense to do them an injustice.

In another sense, however, the Levellers do represent an anti-authoritarian strain (Lilburne's integrity and bravery in this role are perhaps the outstanding features of the story) which became a hallmark of early British socialism (Keir Hardie entering Parliament in a cloth cap, for example).

All this, though, is academic. What makes this book good is the content, the way it is written and also some remarkable insights. On Cromwell: 'His action began to reveal his true nature, seeking influence where power was'. Or on the Agitators: 'The Agitators, who, it should be remembered, were the elected spokesmen of each regiment (direct ancestors of the shop stewards in factories today)'.

The latter indicates another feature of both the book and the events with which it is concerned; their relevance to us in the late twentieth century. Brockway deserves credit for bringing this out. One comparison he doesn't make though is the similarity between events of the 1940s here and those at present unfolding in Iran. In both cases we have the fall of a monarch claiming some kind of divine right succeeded by the rise of a religiously intolerant clique (the Presbyterians filled this role in England's revolution). It will be interesting to see if these parallels run into the future. It can only be hoped that Iran's revolution will in the long run provide as fruitful a source of liberating ideals as England's did 330 years ago. And Brockway can surely be excused of reading history backwards; for the Levellers had a remarkable ability to read history forwards.

Mike Barber

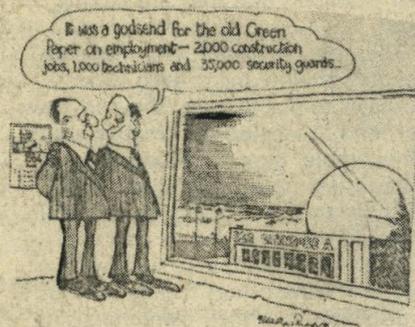
For peat's sake

'A Nuclear Ireland' (eds) John Carroll & Petra Kelly. Published by the Irish Transport & General Workers Union, Unity House, Dublin. £4.50.

THIS BOOK is essentially a record of the proceedings of a conference held in 1978 sponsored by the Irish Transport & General Workers Union — who have come out strongly against the Irish governments proposals for the construction of a nuclear plant at Carnsore Point.

Apart from a couple for pro-nuclear contributions from Irish energy officials ('we need more electricity') and a review of EEC policy by an EEC official it's an unremittingly anti-nuclear book, repeating most of the arguments presented at about the

same time by objectors at the Wind-scale Inquiry. Not surprisingly in fact, since the cast is very similar — Alice Steward, Dr. S. Fernglass, Helen Coldicott (on medical implications) Mike Flood from FOE (on proliferation) together with an extra contribu-

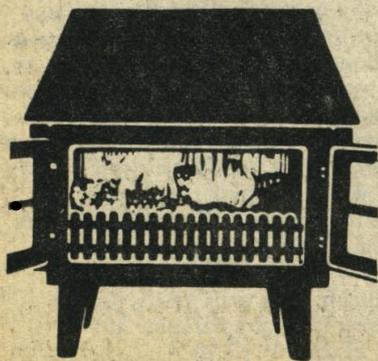


Flue germs

Building Woodburning Stoves Laurieston Hall, published by Lifespan, Townhead, Dunford Bridge, Sheffield, Yorks, 50p post free.

Burning Wood, Dermot McGuigan; Prism Press, £1.95.

WOOD STOVES are simply metal boxes fitted with a tight fitting door, a controllable air vent, a flue and an internal baffle. Commercial makes are either castings (Jotul) or welded from boiler plate (Quebb). The Laurieston stovemakers (Linda Mallet and Dave Treonor) describe in detail a third type of stove made by folding and riveting 16 gauge sheet steel, a material malleable enough to be folded in a home made press and worked with a heavy hammer. Such stoves will not last as long as a cast or boiler plate model but they are cheap and fairly easy to make. Their standard box stove, made from half a 4' by 8' sheet, uses about £7 worth of steel. The total material cost for the one I made was £14, but this includes



broken hacksaw blades, drills, etc. The main difficulty in making such a stove is in working the steel with a hammer to correct errors in cutting and folding; an experienced metal worker would no doubt take care to get the folds exactly right in the first place but any novice working alone may well find that like all manuals this one glides over steps that leave him sweating and swearing.

Three types of stove are described, plus the chortle (featured in UC 35) and a wood burning fireplace. Flues, doors, dampers, concrete bases and installation are also covered. Armed with calm of mind, caution and commonsense any competent DIYer can make himself a stove from this pamphlet. At only 50p it is ludicrously cheap; commercial publishers must regard it as unfair competition. This will surely be the Best AT Book of the year.

And so to the ridiculous: *Burning Wood* must easily be 1979's Worst AT Book. Once upon a time Prism were reputable publishers putting out useful books, McCartney's *Practical Solar Heating* for example. Now they are reduced to this, a pathetic me-too trying to cash in on the success of *The Woodstove Book* (which, as we should have said in UC 37, costs £1.50 post free from Broad Leys Publishing Co., Widdington, Saffron Walden, Essex). It is rambling, scrappy, inaccurate (a bale of straw is only equivalent to 1 gallon of oil, not 1.2 as stated), out of date (Scanfield Boilers have moved from Windmill St, Hythe and Simon Thorpe Ltd. have no multifuel boilers in their range) and illiterate (the blurb talks about how to 'aquire' wood). Pshaw!

Chris Hutton Squire

tion, in an appendix on the ethics of nuclear power, from John Goffman. Petra Kelly summarises many of the arguments in a typically fiery piece calling for a non-nuclear EEC. On a more practical note Cleland McVeigh, from Brighton Poly contributes a short section on alternatives, including some useful estimates of the person power requirements for small solar collector and wind mill manufacturing firms, and John Carroll, Vice-President of the ITGWU analyses the employment implications of nuclear power in general and Carnsore Point in particular — pointing out that many more jobs could be created if the capital (£600m at least) was invested elsewhere (e.g. on solar and wind). And there's a useful set of appendices including one which explores the energy potential of Ireland's peat bogs — a unique source of biomass. 30% of Ireland's electricity is already produced by burning peat.

Although this book is a little uneven in places — occasionally lurching into rhetoric and although it would have been good to have more union contributions it will no doubt prove to be of considerable use in Ireland, as well as being a useful compilation of some of the more dramatic arguments against nuclear power. It's certainly good to see a union sponsoring this type of conference — and making the papers available for a wider audience.

Maybe our own TGWU will follow suit.

Dave Elliott

Juan two

Song of the Man Who Came Through, Douglas Lockhart, The Compton Press £5.95.

This is a beautiful book: not a great work of literature but a book full of heart, inspiring and uplifting.

On first reading, it appears the author has taken as his model the dialogues of Castaneda with his teacher, Don Juan. Indeed, the cosmology presented and the form of the teachings that the protagonist, Peter Derwent, is taken through by his mentor, Sabazius, closely parallel those to be found in Castaneda. On second reading, the mythic qualities of the story become more apparent: the inner journeys are set pieces employing striking and powerful metaphors: 'the cave of blue moonlight', 'the goddess and the child'.

Several passages capture the power and impact of being 'awakened' by a psychedelic with remarkable fidelity. The overall emphasis on the 'man of feeling' working to be aware at all times is a direct echo of the main thrust of Gurdjieff's teaching.

Bernard Scott

Hard press

Here Is *The Other News*, Crispin Aubrey, Charles Landry, Dave Morley. Minority Press Group Series No. 1, £3.50 hardback, £1.25 paperback, (80pp).

THIS BOOK has been written as a report on where the alternative press has got to in the last ten years. The birth of this press began in the 60s; 'During 1967/68, the first local radical papers were founded — By 1969 there were 10, by 1975 over 60'. The papers vary in size, frequency of publication, in fact in every variable you may choose to consider. But, in one aspect they are similar — they exist to provide a forum for issues that are ignored or distorted by the establishment press. Rochdale's *Alternative Press* puts it in a nutshell: 'RAP was started in November 1971 because there wasn't one and continue because there is'.

The book is divided into three sections, a history of the local radical press, a background on how they exist and support themselves today, and lastly, and most valuably, six articles contributed by members of the different papers, showing how they organise their publications.

This last section is important because it tackles the politics within the paper itself — how they operate indicates their relationship with the outside community which they reflect. Also, it enables you to see how separate, or how close they are to the commercial press. As the book says in the section entitled *The Politics of Production*: 'As much through their internal structure as in what they eventually write, many papers argue that they are challenging the established system of newspaper production'.

The historical section raises the interesting point that in the nineteenth century, the balance between establishment and radical press was the reverse of what it is today. The mass popular newspapers belonged to the emerging working class, with names like 'Poor Man's Guardian' and the Chartist 'Northern Star', while the middle class 'Times' and 'Observer' struggled, with low circulations. The cause of the rise in fortune of the establishment press was the rise in advertising, which enabled them to cut their prices. The radical papers were unable to attract advertising revenue, and eventually they went broke.

However, the tradition of radical papers remaining independent of advertisements has been retained, and it is today one of the main ways in which the free press distinguishes

itself from the commercial press. 'The Advertising Dilemma' receives due discussion, as it should, since the argument between independence from outside influences vis a vis financial security from advertising is usually thrashed out in collective meetings whenever telephone and printers' bills are imminent.

In the six individual articles, a great deal of information is given about the aims and interests of the papers. Of particular interest is Swansea's 'Alarm', which centres its attention on a dozen key personalities from local political and business life, known as the 'Swansea Mafia'. The article reads: 'Through articles on their minor and major corrupt practises, Alarm has been partly instrumental in seeing two successive council leaders sent to prison.' Alarm has also extended its role beyond that of a newspaper, by putting up 52

candidates for the May 1979 elections for the Swansea District Council. They justify this move in frequent polemics on the theme: 'How much of this city has to be demolished . . . before we begin to get angry about it and do something about it, and start controlling our own lives'. They are actively attacking corruption, as well as averting people's attention to it.

Other papers show just as deep an involvement in the community. The Islington Gutter Press began from the squatting movement, and has put a lot of energy into the housing problem in London. It has also extended its influence, helping other organisations get off the ground, for example, the National Abortion Campaign, Women's Aid for battered wives, and recently the Islington Socialist Centre, which has in turn helped the Gutter Press expand.

Catheryn Lobbenberg

Hiving off

Architect or Bee? The Human/Technology Relationship, Mike Cooley, Langley Technical Services (95 Sussex Place, Slough, Bucks) £2.50 plus 50p p&p (All proceeds to promote work on socially useful production).

'A BEE puts to shame many an architect in the construction of its cells, but what distinguishes the worst of architects from the best of bees is namely this. The architect will construct in his imagination that which he will ultimately erect in reality. At the end of every labour process, we get that which existed in the consciousness of the labourer at its commencement'. Karl Marx *Das Kapital Vol. 1*.

In 'Architect or Bee', Mike Codey, a leading member of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee, indicates how the independent creativity, skill and tacit knowledge of workers alluded to by Marx, has been gradually fragmented absorbed and controlled by the capitalist — and state capitalist — system, with technology providing one of the key means.

This collection is a little uneven — it includes academic papers, alongside speeches — but it certainly provides a comprehensive analysis of the politics of technology. Cooley's ability to link abstract theory to practical reality is well in evidence — while left theoreticians struggle for the 'right analysis' Cooley is in there swinging with convincing arguments based on real world industrial exper-

ience, including his involvement with the Lucas Aerospace Workers Alternative Corporate Plan. Not surprisingly he has become a familiar figure on environmental platforms — and this volume includes some of his speeches on nuclear power, workers plans, together with his views on community politics, feminism, the neutrality or otherwise of science and the like.



What emerges finally from the book is a clear picture of the way in which human creativity and imagination has been blunted and repressed in order to maintain the social system we live in.

But at the same time it gives us a picture of how individuals and groups have managed to organise collectively to challenge this situation. And therein lies hope for a future in which we are not simply reduced to being passive drones. As Cooley comments 'Most human development, technical, cultural and political, depended upon those movements which questioned, challenged and where necessary disobeyed the then established order'.

Dave Elliott

Debugging Darwin

Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History, Stephen J. Gould, Pelican, £1.50.

'OUR THEORIES, whether true or false, tell us more about the world than we yet know', said Carl Popper and nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in Stephen Gould's erudite survey of evolutionary theory. The vast range of topics covered in this book are in fact a collection of essays written for 'Natural History Magazine' by Gould between 1974 and 1977 and fall roughly into three categories; the historical theories of evolution, areas of study relevant to contemporary evolutionary thought and socio-biology.

Stephan Gould deals with the historical background to Darwin in some depth outlining the many theories from Darwin's time onwards, not only those that are still relevant but also many that have conflicted with them. The quite recent work of Velikovsky, with his *Worlds in Collision* theory which Gould sees as gloriously wrong, is given as much space as the much more popular and widely known theories of Lamarck; indeed Lamarck's differences with Darwin are minor in the light of Velikovsky's claim that Venus came from Jupiter like a comet passing Earth twice through its tail in 1500 BC, bequeathing plagues on us, nearly colliding with Mars which in turn nearly collided with us in 700 BC. Our collective desire to forget this time of terror Velikovsky claims has resulted in our present neurosis and aggression. Gould has set Velikov-

sky up as a philosopher's strawman as he is so easy to demolish, but it makes for entertaining reading.

The essays on contemporary aspects of evolution are illustrated by what Gould calls 'evolutionary exemplars' and 'patterns and punctuations'; these provide ample scope for some fascinating insights into the nature of evolution. Why, he asks, does a fly eat its mother from the inside? Or how can a clam mount a fish on its rear end? On currently more important topics he deals with bamboo, essential to the survival of pandas, flowering only once every 120 years, and the theories of Cornell ecologist, R.H. Whitaker, whose new taxonomy has radically altered our understanding of our relationship with the world.

It's all good stuff and it's all here, morphology, palaeontology, the cambrian explosion and Noah's flood. It just seems a pity that considering all that's gone before Gould's last section, '*The Science of and Politics of Human Nature*', should be so short. In all fairness he does deal with the main topics; why we should not name Hunan Races, Racist Arguments and IQ, and Potentiality versus Determinism; but perhaps we could have expected a little more from such a lucid book.

Simon Woodhead

I Ching

'*Revolution: There and Back*', Jan Bredsdorff, Faber & Faber 1980 207pp Hardback £8.95.

THIS BOOK reads beautifully — a rare event considering that it is a report on life in China, covering the changes before, during and after the Cultural Revolution. Jan Bredsdorff is a novelist who has spent some years teaching in China. He gives you a real feel of the place by mixing fragments of conversation, images and history, receptions, meetings and street life.

Two primary factors emerge from the book. One is that an extreme puritanical thread runs through the whole society. This helps maintain an efficient patriarchal bureaucracy. The second point is that China has degenerated since the cultural revolution. Jan reports 'I have hesitated a great deal in writing

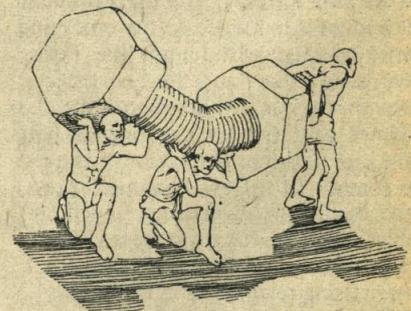
this book. My main concern has been whether it might not be used as fuel for the right wing . . . but I realise that this fear has been groundless. Events in the past years have shown that China herself has delivered more than enough fuel for that point of view: her amazing admiration for and cultivation of so many of the vilest elements of Western capitalism; her drive to reach Western standards with little apparent thought of whether we are in fact worth emulating; the uncritical admiration of politicians of the extreme right — West Germany's Strauss, England's Thatcher, Nixon of the United States and the former Shah of Iran, to name but a few!

John Southgate

No Fizz!

'*Nuclear Power and Public Policy: The social and ethical problems of fission technology*' K.S. Shrader — Frechette. Reidel, \$10.50.

'THIS IS applied philosophy at its very best', says the promotion blurb. Certainly the author provides us with both a good and easy-to-understand account of the safety issues surrounding nuclear power, and a scholarly essay on the moral and ethical implications. Her analysis suggests that a whole range of moral rights and ethical principles are being overlooked or distorted by the current approach to risk assessment, radiation levels, public safety, long term waste storage and so on. Her conclusion, perhaps unsurprisingly, is that if we are to get anywhere near genuine 'social assessments' of new technology, as opposed to dubious cost-benefit analysis produced by distant experts then philosophers must play a role — along with the rest of us.



But then maybe that's to ask too much — even of an applied philosopher. As Marx said 'Philosophers have only described the world: the point is to change it'.

Dave Elliott



Yattety Yat

The YAT (Youth Action Teams) Manual. Sundlee C.A. & Stapp W. 1979. Social Action Research Center, California.

THIS BOOK describes how to set up a Youth Action Team — a group of young people working together on a project or issue which they feel is important; for example, a Consumer Action service dealing with local consumers' complaints, or a Young People's Rights Lobby.

If you understand the American education system, and social education/group work jargon, you may find this book interesting, as I did, interesting, but not, however, a book I would use much in my own work with kids; nor one I would recommend to anyone new to the young volunteer/social education field.

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Alison Curnow

Kaput

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EVER SINCE 'Limits to Growth' in 1971/2 we have been proclaiming the oil is running out, but it has always seemed comfortably far enough ahead to have been blase about it. However the first pinch is not so far off now, according to the Worldwatch Institute who have rushed out this report in book form. Their thesis is that although



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Pete Glass

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THE WEALTH REPORT must be making somebody rich, since Routledge & Kegan Paul has decided to follow it up with another socialist discussion series, this time biannual. The aims of the *Politics and Power* editorial board are ambitious — discussions, surveys and reviews of every problem facing socialism in Britain — and the exercise deserves to become permanent if the standard of number one can be kept up.

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Martin Ince

Debugging Darwin

Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History, Stephen J. Gould, Pelican, £1.50.

'OUR THEORIES, whether true or false, tell us more about the world than we yet know', said Carl Popper and nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in Stephen Gould's erudite survey of evolutionary theory. The vast range of topics covered in this book are in fact a collection of essays written for 'Natural History Magazine' by Gould between 1974 and 1977 and fall roughly into three categories; the historical theories of evolution, areas of study relevant to contemporary evolutionary thought and socio-biology.

Stephan Gould deals with the historical background to Darwin in some depth outlining the many theories from Darwin's time onwards, not only those that are still relevant but also many that have conflicted with them. The quite recent work of Velikovsky, with his *Worlds in Collision* theory which Gould sees as gloriously wrong, is given as much space as the much more popular and widely known theories of Lamarck; indeed Lamarck's differences with Darwin are minor in the light of Velikovsky's claim that Venus came from Jupiter like a comet passing Earth twice through its tail in 1500 BC, bequeathing plagues on us, nearly colliding with Mars which in turn nearly collided with us in 700 BC. Our collective desire to forget this time of terror Velikovsky claims has resulted in our present neurosis and aggression. Gould has set Velikov-

sky up as a philosopher's strawman as he is so easy to demolish, but it makes for entertaining reading.

The essays on contemporary aspects of evolution are illustrated by what Gould calls 'evolutionary exemplars' and 'patterns and punctuations'; these provide ample scope for some fascinating insights into the nature of evolution. Why, he asks, does a fly eat its mother from the inside? Or how can a clam mount a fish on its rear end? On currently more important topics he deals with bamboo, essential to the survival of pandas, flowering only once every 120 years, and the theories of Cornell ecologist, R.H. Whitaker, whose new taxonomy has radically altered our understanding of our relationship with the world.

It's all good stuff and it's all here, morphology, palaeontology, the cambrian explosion and Noah's flood. It just seems a pity that considering all that's gone before Gould's last section, 'The Science of and Politics of Human Nature', should be so short. In all fairness he does deal with the main topics; why we should not name Human Races, Racist Arguments and IQ, and Potentiality versus Determinism; but perhaps we could have expected a little more from such a lucid book.

Simon Woodhead

I Ching

'*Revolution: There and Back*', Jan Bredsdorff, Faber & Faber 1980 207pp Hardback £8.95.

THIS BOOK reads beautifully — a rare event considering that it is a report on life in China, covering the changes before, during and after the Cultural Revolution. Jan Bredsdorff is a novelist who has spent some years teaching in China. He gives you a real feel of the place by mixing fragments of conversation, images and history, receptions, meetings and street life.

Two primary factors emerge from the book. One is that an extreme puritanical thread runs through the whole society. This helps maintain an efficient patriarchal bureaucracy. The second point is that China has degenerated since the cultural revolution. Jan reports 'I have hesitated a great deal in writing

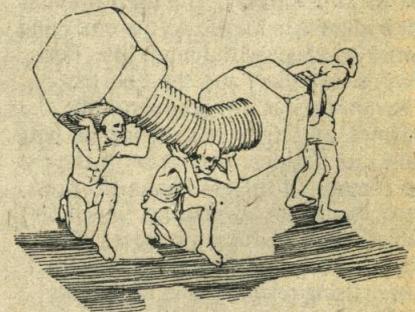
this book. My main concern has been whether it might not be used as fuel for the right wing . . . but I realise that this fear has been groundless. Events in the past years have shown that China herself has delivered more than enough fuel for that point of view: her amazing admiration for and cultivation of so many of the vilest elements of Western capitalism; her drive to reach Western standards with little apparent thought of whether we are in fact worth emulating; the uncritical admiration of politicians of the extreme right — West Germany's Strauss, England's Thatcher, Nixon of the United States and the former Shah of Iran, to name but a few!

John Southgate

No Fizz!

'*Nuclear Power and Public Policy: The social and ethical problems of fission technology*' K.S. Shrader — Frechette. Reidel, \$10.50.

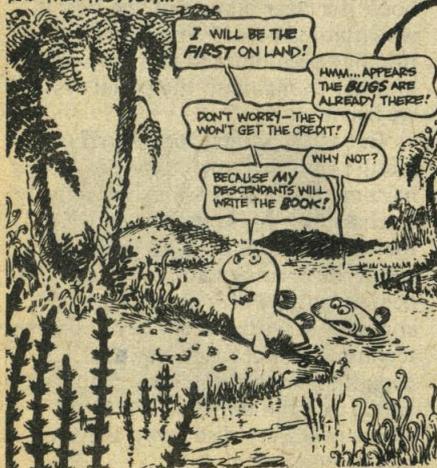
'THIS IS applied philosophy at its very best', says the promotion blurb. Certainly the author provides us with both a good and easy-to-understand account of the safety issues surrounding nuclear power, and a scholarly essay on the moral and ethical implications. Her analysis suggests that a whole range of moral rights and ethical principles are being overlooked or distorted by the current approach to risk assessment, radiation levels, public safety, long term waste storage and so on. Her conclusion, perhaps unsurprisingly, is that if we are to get anywhere near genuine 'social assessments' of new technology, as opposed to dubious cost-benefit analysis produced by distant experts then philosophers must play a role — along with the rest of us.



But then maybe that's to ask too much — even of an applied philosopher. As Marx said 'Philosophers have only described the world: the point is to change it'.

Dave Elliott

BY THE DEVONIAN, PLANTS HAD COVERED THE LAND — AND THE ANIMALS FOLLOWED. FIRST CAME THE BUGS, AND THEN THE FISH...



Yattety Yat

The YAT (Youth Action Teams) Manual. Sundlee C.A. & Stapp W. 1979. Social Action Research Center, California.

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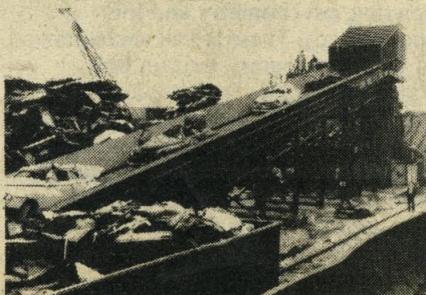
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Martin Ince

Berufsverbot

Wallraff — *The Undesirable Journalist*, Pluto Press, 1977, £2.50.

GUNTER WALLRAFF is probably the most remarkable investigative journalist in Europe. It is, therefore, very good to see at least some of his revelations translated and published in English. What makes Wallraff remarkable is not simply the extent of his revelations about some of West German society's most powerful fortresses, nor simply that the targets he chooses are so powerful; rather it is the method by which he makes his discoveries. This method involves taking on a new character, a new disguise, a new job and performing it perhaps for several months, all the time recording everything he does, hears and overhears. While some of us might manage this in some jobs for a short time, it must be a rare talent that can take on jobs of some responsibility and trust, hold them for long periods of time, reveal all there is to reveal, publish it and still have the skill to take on another disguise and perform again (and again). Yet Wallraff has made a living out of it. You'd think that the captains of industry would get wise after a while; but Wallraff has not yet run out of top-ranking fall guys.

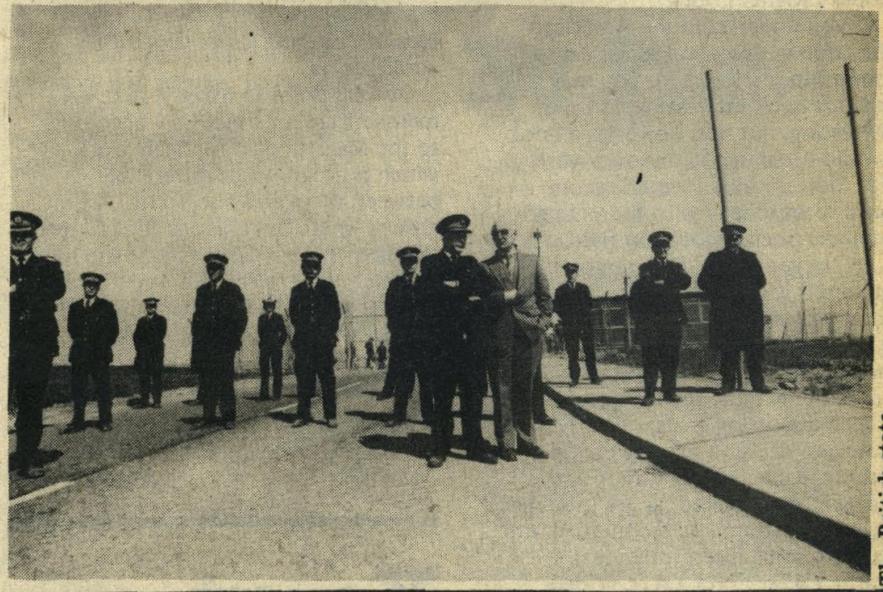
All this may be good clean (or unclean) fun, but is it of any importance? To answer this you have to look at the background against which Wallraff operates.

In West Germany there is considerable pressure to conform. This is for a number of reasons: West Germany is the economic miracle (so what have you got to complain about?), West Germany is on the frontier of the 'free' world (so opponents of the state are Soviet agents) West Germany has a Nazi past (so you should be thankful that it's better now).

The pressure is applied in several ways. To take one example, there's *Berufsverbot*, the practice by which 'radicals', 'extremists' and others whose loyalty to the constitution cannot be guaranteed are excluded from employment by the state. Candidates for the Civil Service must be relied on 'to support at all times the democratic constitutional order as defined in the constitution' (Decree on Radicals 1972). *At all times*: not only in the office or school but in the pub, the bus and the bath too. And a subsequent court decision extends the required support to 'the prevailing constitutional order as it stands today' (Federal Constitutional Court, 1975); not only the system, then, but the status

quo too. *Berufsverbot* in action affects not just the official who loses the job held for 15 years because he had been a member of a Communist Party for two years, or the law student refused professional training because of past membership of 'red cells'; it affects friends, relatives and all other contacts of those directly affected. Many more conform, keeping their beliefs to themselves for fear of losing their jobs too.

Meanwhile the Verfassungsschutz (constitution defence force) photographs



The British state

demonstrations, records membership of third world, women's or anti-nuclear groups and more, all (according to its chief) to add to 'the mosaic' of information collected about its 'suspects'. It is already becoming like Bentham's panopticon — the society where the observer in the control tower sees all but is not himself there.

And that is where Wallraff comes in. His importance lies not only in his revealing the seamy side of 'the economic miracle' but also in that he is the arch-nonconformist, the man in the panopticon who manages to look inside the control tower. For that reason alone, both he and his book are most desirable.

Mike Barber

Ghostline

The Essential T.C. Lethbridge, edited by Tom Graves and Janet Hault; Routledge £5.95.

TOM LETHBRIDGE was an archaeologist who devoted the last fifteen years of his life to the study of parapsychology; this is a selection from the nine books, from *Gogmagog* (1957) to *The Power of the Pendulum* (1976), in which he described his experiments on ghosts, dowsing, psychometry and the ancient gods. These are all accounts of work in progress, written in a style that rambles from topic to topic, fascinating to read but difficult to use for serious study. The editors, both experienced parapsychologists, have cut them down to about one-fifth, concentrating on the three major themes that Lethbridge stated at the end of his second book, *Ghost*

and *Ghoul*, in 1961; ghosts are no more than pictures produced by human minds; there is something entirely wrong with our conception of time; and magic is the application of resonance, the interconnection of all things.

Lethbridge was evidently a very wise old bird indeed; it's a tragedy that he died just as the revival of serious study of these mysteries was starting. Let's hope that this excellent summary of his life's work will encourage others to build on it. He got his fingers into the cracks in reality: it is for us to widen them into a window.

Chris Hutton Squire



Roundup

A Radical Agenda for London (ed. Peter Hall, Fabian Tract 469, £1) is about as radical as cold tea. The Labour 'wets', technocratic, statist and right-wing are out in force here, running with the London left some of the way (London Enterprise Board, London Development Agency co-ops, but community involvement? Heavens, no. Even environmental improvements are to be done by councils, rather than the people themselves. On transport, the old 'ringway box' plus several other motorways are presented as a sensible compromise between the road lobby and all those nasty bourgeois carless workers who don't want their houses knocked down so that the bourgeois car-owning bourgeois can get around faster (= 'local amenity groups'). The old myth that Docklands needs massive road construction plus an expensive tube line to attract businesses where from?) is repeated. And tourism, rapidly reducing parts of London to a 'little ol' England' parody of itself is seen as a great opportunity; management rather than control is the keynote here. As under most established party policies, this is a recipe in practice for London becoming the Benidorm of a declining nation passing Spain on the way down. No more of our space, or, we suggest, your money for this. After all, who needs London?

The proceedings of March's modestly-billed *'Debate of the Decade'* have been rushed into print, at a speed normally reserved for accounts of sieges, under the title *'The Crisis and Future of the Left'* (Pluto, £1.50, 80pp). Edited by Peter Hain, who chaired the event, the non-meeting of famous minds (Stuart Holland, Tony Benn, Audrey Wise,



The parliamentary road Tariq Ali, Paul Foot and Hilary Wainwright) is now in black and white, plus

the interruptions, applause etc. The general conclusion recorded by Hain that links are needed to independent groups (women's groups, trade unions, environmentalists, etc.) outside 'the Labour movement' is, probably, welcome, but Hilary Wainwright's reference to 'pats on the head from the Labour left to extra-parliamentary politics' shows the dangers. Benn's speech reads better than it sounded at the time; Paul Foot's emphasis on organising struggle on an industrial not a geographic basis (where does that leave the unemployed?) is neatly taken to bits by Audrey Wise ('I object to defining the struggle as though it only goes on in factories'), who also refers to Lucas and other campaigns. Despite several points skirted (control of technology, direction of research, use of capitalist measurements such as GNP to judge socialist progress) that *Undercurrents* readers might hope to see, the 'book of the debate' is recommended to those who still have hope in politics.

Undercurrents ancients may remember articles on London's secret tunnels (issues 8 and 9); Laurie's *'Beneath the City Streets'* lists a few too. Those with an interest in this (what is that lift on the northbound platform of Belsize Park station?) are advised to read *'Tunnels Under London'* by Nigel Penrick (Fenris-Wolf Publications, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD, 75p incl. postage), a duplicated booklet dealing with the whole topic in detail. The London Underground system is covered well, and the author's suggestion, that new lines are being built in old secret tunnels, is backed up by lots of references and maps. Wartime installations get close attention, but Pennick misses one or two old favourites — how about the tunnel under Edith Cavell's statue near Trafalgar Square, clearly visible through the grille at the side? There's even a notice saying 'Cavell statue — No Smokeing', on the subsurface wall, suggesting that spelling, at least, is not assured survival of armageddon, whatever else may be.

The goal of *'Laurel's Kitchen; a Handbook of Vegetarian Cookery and Nutrition'* by Laurel Robertson, Carol Flinders and Bronwen Godfrey (Routledge, £7.95, 508pp) is to convey understanding of food and nutrition and help you feed yourself well. It succeeds. About half the book is recipes that may or may not be to your taste (one man's nut cutlet etc.) The rest is a huge amount of information on foods and nutrition. After opening with a more philosophical section, there are tables of the nutrient content of foods, particularly wholefoods; tables special-

ly analysing the fat content of different foods, and the ratio of polyunsaturated to unsaturated to saturated fats; discussions of each of the basic foodstuffs, vitamins, and minerals; more tables on which foods are good for a particular nutrient; discussion on the special needs of being a vegan . . . In general, it could straighten out a lot of half truths that even well-informed people like *Undercurrents* readers occasionally pick up.

'Radiation', written and published by the Radiation & Health Information Service (50p, 31pp) is a beginners guide to radiation — both ionising and non-ionizing — and its effects on the human body. It's written in non-technical language and covers the different types of radiation, natural and man-made sources, and the effect of radiation on human health. Useful particularly for people who don't know much about the medical effects of radiation, and



are dying to prove the Atomic Energy Authority's reassurance wrong . . .

If your interests are in the past rather than the future, try Dennis Hardy's *Alternative Communities in Nineteenth Century England* (Longman, £5.95), which sets the communities in their historical context, and finishes with a discussion of twentieth century communes as part of a continuing process of political activity. Sociological verbiage makes for dry reading from time to time, but it's comforting to be told that the social impact of community experiments doesn't end when the communities fall apart; communitarian ideas and forms of organisation, so the theory goes, long outlive their places of origin.

Finally, our friends at the Centre for Alternative Technology (Llwyngwern Quarry, Machynlleth, Powys, Wales) have asked us to let people know they stock an American edition of Jerry Mander's *'Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television'* (reviewed in UC 40) at £2.50, compared to the Harvester price of £12.50.

DON'T BE ALTERNATIVE

I can't understand your article about Longo Mai (UC 40). Three or four years ago there were a few TV documentaries about it. Very objective made films! You saw the straight male pioneers driving their tractors, women cooking, fanatic joyless faces: a real Hitler Youth atmosphere. TV, radio and record players weren't allowed. Later I met a few people at an alternative event who had visited the place. Their comment: a real concentration camp, unorganised and chaotic, absolutely male dominated; and they also told me that most visitors only stayed a day or so; the unfriendly atmosphere and ten hours work a day made them run away; they told of loopholes in the walls that reminded them of wartime . . . and of Remi driving around in his expensive car pushing everyone to work harder. So for me your article is not new.

I suspect that in a few years you will publish an article about an English commune I know. They look different but for me they look as dangerous as Longo Mai. I don't want to write their name: they hate me, I think, because I wrote in another (English) paper what I think about them and what I've heard about them when I've visited English communes. So let us look forward!

Swami Prem Rolf Lutzerath

Pfintzalstr. 54
7500 Karlsruhe 41
West Germany

P.S. Many people are looking for an 'alternative' lifestyle with an 'alternative' mind. That's a worse fact!

All this over-eggs the pudding somewhat to our mind: if LM was really as unpleasant as this it would have collapsed by now, wouldn't it? Or does it exploit a masochistic streak in the alternative movement?

CORRECTION

I find I have to send you corrections to the article translated by Lesley Grinstead on Longo Mai (UC 40), the co-operative that is bringing a law suit against me.

At your request, I sent a clear and precise summary of the facts. Your article, which was not written by me, contains a certain number of inaccuracies. I ask you to

correct this by publishing this letter in your next issue.

1) I never said that a flood of Swiss money enabled Remi to build small foolhardy businesses or that the farm was relegated to the background. L.M. built, of course, but, I do not know whether the farm was pushed to the background. L.M. mainly bought up businesses.

2) Operation Melon never included buying up small businesses at very low prices as this operation had nothing to do with small businesses: it was concerned with selling fruit.

3) Remi did not go into details over the murder or suicide of each of the three women who died. He simply declared that all three of them had been murdered and one of them had been raped. He had to recognise that Rael had committed suicide at the court at Digne on June 5th 1980.

I do not want the 'retransmission' mistakes of your paper attributed to me.

Francoise d'Eaubonne

26 Rue Lecluse
Paris, XVIIeme

LONGO MAI IS OK

My two years at Longo Mai were spent in four of its co-operative projects. I got to know most of the 150 members; this is possible because we moved around from project to project.

I am deeply grateful to the people at Longo Mai because for the first time ever (I am over 50 and have brought up a family of four) I have been forced to question my most ardently held values and beliefs; this often drove me to deep despair but in that lay the real opportunity to look at everything in a different way, and so I slowly understood my own sentimentalities, conditioning and confusion. I realised that everybody else was going through a similar process, and that I needed the open and critical dialogue with the others.

In this process the 'old' members (in terms of length of experience) provided the most valuable 'confrontations'. I learnt how much courage it needs to be honest and really open to other people and to open up yourself to your friends. Through these challenges real trust becomes possible and this trust becomes the basis for collective strength.

The commitment towards the ideas and ideals of co-operative living is laced with a good dose of healthy scepticism. Decisions are taken by as many as possible, getting together during the evening 'full-assembly', which often last far into the night. Differences of opinion exist of course, but they are brought into the open; dissatisfaction is not allowed to fester. The more mature and experienced members (average age is 24) are always intent to explain that only patient and humane persistence are worthwhile. It is said by members that possibly their children (there are 26 of them) will achieve convincing results.

I simply cannot be bothered to deal with the hysterical outbursts of ex-LMers, nor with the cheap nasty verbiage of a would-be writer, who has never spent a single day at LM.

Longo Mai invites open criticism; it wishes to involve as many people as possible; it invites hundreds of people to its annual congresses. This July and August there will be a series of week-long seminars led by scientists, economists, and other experts from several countries, who will look together for practical alternative solutions to our problems. Everybody is invited (details from LM, available from me).

Brigit Wright

12 Lytton Rd
Leicester 4

YOU CAN PLEASE . . .

What has happened to you? In the last four issues, that delicate struggling flower, an anarchist political analysis, seems to have been fed sodium chlorate.

On the rare occasions when a political article has appeared (yes, look around: someone in the collective has been writing political articles) behold, the same left analysis you can read anywhere. And apart from the issue of nuclear power—what political issues have you covered? Where is the anarchist political theory? (If at this point you trot out with the tired reply—that politics is implicit in all our articles, you're wrong. This only means that you haven't got a clue either. These things have to be made explicit).

I see in the last issue the only serious attempt at anarchist analysis was in regard to communes, another indication that your perception of anarchism is 'I can't understand this world, I'll go and make one of my own'.

And may I add I was appalled at the title of that article. Next time, 'Anarchism as it is lived' please.

In desperation.

Grumbleweed

Green & Orange Tent
6 acre field
Kepples Farm
Abingdon

BRADFORD C.A.I.T.S.

In UC 40 Mike George of CAITS at the North East London Poly states that he is in dispute with us. We would like UC readers to know that we are not in dispute with him. Our CAITS, as Mike calls it, is not ours at all but belongs to those industrial workers, community workers and academics in the Bradford community who choose to use it and run it for the purposes of advancing socially useful production as an alternative to redundancy and unemployment. And by the way, Mike has a long standing invitation to visit us here in Bradford . . .

UC readers who would like to know more about us please write to the address below,

Dave Parsons
Dave Stansfield
Peter Southwood

Bradford CAITS
c/o Trade Union Studies
Centre
Bradford College
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~ letters ~

THOUGHT

Bravo for BBC2's production *The Scientists*. I think this is the first time the media has attempted to make the obvious connections between such poisons as radioactive isotopes, Thalidomide, Dioxin, etc. and the psychological imbalances that characterise the 'civilised' world today.

DNA is the real record of History, the real message of the Cosmos. The double helix of modern molecular biology, the caduceus of Hermes of the ancient Greeks, the timeless yin/yang symbol of Tao. DNA is literally a complex chain of logic, constructed out of the fundamental building blocks of the Universe, atoms and molecules.

Today, we have all the Knowledge necessary to rediscover Eden, Stonehenge now has its microchip, the spokenword its communication satellite, light from the sun can now be made to release its energy, sex is being released from the straight-jacket of religious moralistic dogma, the deserts themselves could bring forth green plants.

But 'modern' society has mistaken the Mirage for Reality. In seeking to usurp the power of the Cosmic Intelligence rather than readapt its ways, we are smashing atoms and smashing logic. The American Dream of material wealth is now a global nightmare of material destruction. Everywhere, even the simplest of human activities are now impossible without the power and influence that only money can buy.

But to continue, Earth is now approaching Genesis III—that is cataclysm and/or Armageddon. Cataclysm is written into the Destiny of Mankind, but Armageddon is *not* a necessary consequence. The first and last of all choices now confronts us—to partake of the forbidden fruit, the fruit of brute power, the Atomic Apple, or not. If the illogic of Doublethink prevails we can say farewell to the Idea of Evolution of Life on Earth. Let us try to remember that: War is not Peace, Ignorance is not

Strength, Freedom is not Slavery. The temptation to pervert natural logic, the temptation to substitute Dogma for Doctrine, is very powerful, it is the inexorable Law of Entropy. Sanity, action guided by intelligence, is now making its last stand against the mystique of Might is Right.

And *this* is the Real War—the war between Ecologic, logical ecology and its natural conclusions and the blatant contradiction of an elitist few haves existing in a world of have-nots, have-nots who do not even enjoy the most basic of human rights. In this war, Satan is NOT the serpent in the leafy jungle—with its potent sexual connotations—but St. George in all his armour, the armour of the desert cactus and armadillo—the armour of prejudice, bigotry and conservatism—the ideology that refuses to acknowledge man's natural needs and functions.

So, I for one, hope the BBC will continue to *vigilantly* keep us all informed of what we had and how busily we are throwing it all away. In a world of Goliaths we need all the Davids, not hors de combat, available. Otherwise there will be no more flowers.

Adam Blackadder

Rigg Beck
Newlands, Keswick
Cumbria

DEPROGRAMMING

I agreed with the gist of Lisabeth Bear's article on deprogramming (*UC 40*) but wish to raise a few points.

Firstly, she fell into the trap of making very powerful assertion without qualifying each one properly. She mentioned the U.S. laws that suppress the intrinsic human rights of those in new religious groups without giving one example of such a law. She said that institutional psychiatry was the worst offender in stifling individual religious beliefs. That too had little objective substantiation. If she believed psychiatry to be 'unscientific and groundless' then she should have at least given us some evidence to reinforce her rigorous accusation. Fortunately for

Lisabeth Bear I am sympathetic to her message but its suppositions and generalisations might well have found some readers doubting its whole credibility.

Secondly, I was deeply disturbed by her simplist verdict that the appalling Jonestown tragedy happened because of group violence. Did she not wonder what caused the violence in the first place?

Could it be said that the people of Jonestown—not unlike so many of us—felt abandoned and lost in a confusing world, and like a child lost in a fair-ground, turned to an authority for help? They may well have found themselves caught up in the rules and dogmas but were only too glad to drift along in what was relatively secure. They were perhaps both pressurised and comforted by the fact that hundreds of other people were doing the same.

The tragedy struck and the new safer world began to fall apart. They ran from one frightening world to the next and when they found that it too was disintegrating they had nowhere, so they thought, to go. Suicide, with the backing of authority, may have seemed almost easy.

I have therefore serious doubts about charismatic religious leaders who, because of their own fear of abandonment, seek to be controlled. Religion has to find the balance between individual dependence and individual autonomy. We all have the right to question any religion that emphasises one of these at the expense of the other. Jonestown, I believe, lost its balance.

Mrs. Veronica A.T. Young

33 Cheyne Hill
Surbiton, Surrey

In her article 'Deprogramming' (*UC 40*), Lisabeth Bear states "... there has been a long-standing policy of separation between Church and State in this and other Western countries". I feel that I can't let this remark pass without comment.

I believe that it would be more accurate to say the exact opposite; that there has been a long standing policy of symbiosis between the established churches and the various states of Western Europe. Let us consider the specific case of the relation-

ship between the British state and the Anglican church.

Firstly, British law provides special protection for Christian thinkers with the Blasphemy Laws, which, if enforced, prevent free discussion and debate of religious matters. (This is the law which Mary Whitehouse has made use of in recent times...)

Secondly, the law demands that all children shall be subjected to compulsory Christian indoctrination and worship rituals unless the parents specifically request to the contrary.

Thirdly, the laws relating to Sunday openings of places of culture, sport, entertainment and trade are a direct result of the links between the Church and British legal system.

It would possible to extend this list considerably.

Ms. Bear should not be surprised at the persecution suffered by those who identify with new emerging religions: appalling though it is, history is full of examples of adherents of 'new' religions being invited to forego their beliefs or suffer agoony. However, it is vital to draw a distinction between the new faiths, and those (such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam) which have been around for long enough for cult and state to work together to the benefit of both parties.

In Communist Europe, of course, the situation is different. Communism (in the Marxist-Leninist sense) and Christianity would appear to be mutually irreconcilable: hence the Church is regarded with mistrust and suspicion.

Whether it is better to live in a Capitalist western state and be indoctrinated into theistic beliefs, or in a Communist state and be indoctrinated into atheistic beliefs, is debatable. Personally, I'd sooner live in an anarchist-based society whose approach to religion was agnostic and secularist, but until a substantial number of people begin to recognise and question the interdependence between Church and State in Western Europe, that day will never come, will it?

Stephen D. Morgan

'Eddystone'
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PERSONAL

FEMALE divorcee, forties, seeks compatible male companion any age, to laugh/cry with; interested in ideas, written/spoken word, art, politics; nature lover/affectionate; would enjoy creating comfortable home; growing fruit/vegetables. I have £20,000 to purchase farm house/rural house with large garden, condition unimportant. Tel: (01) 568 8411; or write Jane Russell, 79 Hartham Road, Isleworth, Middx.

NATTA

NATTA—the Network for Alternative Technology and Technology Assessment—is a national coalition of AT activists, set up to lobby for and support local level AT projects. It produces a bi-monthly newsletter packed full of news and information, and has just published its first pamphlet—*Alternative Technology—the answer to the energy crisis?* (70p). Individual membership costs £1 p.a. and entitles you to receive the newsletter plus publications. NATTA's third national conference will be on 'Community Action and Alternative Technology'—to be held in London in November.

Full details of membership, publications etc. from NATTA c/o The Alternative Technology Group, Faculty of Technology, Open University, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK7 6AA.

Affiliated organisations include Undercurrents, OU-ATG, the Centre for Alternative Technology, New Age Access, ERL, EDAT, SCRAM and SERA.

COURSES

HONOURS graduate, with computing experience or background, sought for action-research project on Worker Information Systems in co-operatives. Contact: Rob Paton, Co-operatives Research Unit, Faculty of Technology, Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.

ENERGY politics: third year of 5-weekly conferences on social implications of the energy situation begins 27 September.

Particulars: Harry Frost, University of London, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 26 Russell Square, London, WC1B 5DQ.

LAND

FAMILY (husband, pregnant wife, two children, two dogs, two cats), urgently require piece of land with dwelling (to rent). Purpose, the study and practice of self-sufficiency in general, and bio-dynamic/French intensive vegetable growing in particular. The condition of the dwelling is not too important provided the terms of the lease are satisfactory. Will anyone willing and able to offer genuine assistance, please contact: Roy and Lucia Birch, 8 Little Elmbridge, Longlevens, Gloucester GL2 0HH. Tel: (0452) 34569.

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EVENTS

ECOLOGY PARTY summer gathering to be held at Worthy Farm, Pilton, Nr. Glastonbury, Somerset, Thursday August 7 to Sunday 10th. Well-known speakers on eco-politics and alternatives; discussion workshops; theatre; stalls; children's play-space. Adults £4 admission, inclusive of evening entertainment; children free. Bring your tent—campers must be self-sufficient. Food on sale. Enquiries: (0734) 478297.

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THE FIRST homely house: would you like to live in, and share ownership of a large house as a member of a warm, caring community? Contact: O Moss, (01) 764 8231 or (01) 636 1686, ext. 388.

PEOPLE wanted to join us in search for property in S Warks to divide into separate small holdings. Partial self-sufficiency. Capital and/or income essential. Phone Stratford 68697.

CARTWHEEL. Cartwheel now rolling a thousand miles around Britain raising consciousness and money for new village community. People to help push urgently required. It's great fun. For full details ring Graham, (01) 656 5155.

SUE MANST and daughter need harmonious people to live with or look for place with. I am a vegetarian training to teach Iyengar Yoga. Have some left/feminist involvement, but am pissed-off with narrowness of many lefties. London or near town (my training is here), outside perhaps later. 48 Trafalgar Avenue, London SE15.

COMMUNITY—8 adults, three kids, centred on self-sufficiency, farming, crafts, building work, gardening, fishing, some group childcare, is open to visitors interested in community living and possibly to new members. Co-operative income sharing structure. Large old house and farm near the Welsh coast. Please write first enclosing sae for further details, to: Glaneirw House Community, Blaenporth, Cardigan, Dyfed, Wales.

PROFESSIONAL couple, both 28, with own home and yacht working towards extended family/communal co-operative/self-sufficient small-holding wish to meet others to explore possibilities. Please write to John and Juliet Morgan, 30 Manorside Close, Abbey Wood, London SE2 9HD.

VEGETARIAN community seeks people, ideas and plans; study and essential community, with work and accommodation. Allan, c/o 13, The Rose Walk, Newhaven, Sussex.

PARSONAGE Farm commune have some vacant space at the moment. We are nine adults and three children and have some workshop space available. Please write for details to Parsonage Farm, 128 Low Road, Burwell, Cambs.

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COMMUNAL living/working collectives. For full details of some groups looking for new members send sae to 2 Mentor Street, Manchester 13.

FREE SCHOOL. We're looking for people to join us in setting up a school in a loose community on a farm to teach our own children. Libertarian, anti-authoritarian. Also any other practical co-operation. Box JPP.

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INFORMAL HOLIDAYS, N Devon organic farm. Bed breakfast and evening meal. Vegetarian, meat and wholefoods provided. Send sae to: Vernon and Oatley, Butlers Farm, Chittlehamholt, Umberleigh, N Devon.

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ASTROLOGER offers accurate personal birth chart and character analysis, £7; including future trends, £11. Alternatively send for details: John Willmott, Millbrae, Bunessan, Mull, Argyll.

BIOFEEDBACK: introductory workshop on mental/cognitive development leading to ongoing course, 7 pm Wednesday September 10 at the East/West Centre, 88 Old St, London EC1: £2. Details from Biofeedback Workshop, Perleen House, Hazel Rd, Ash Green, Aldershot, Hants; tel: Sunbury 85321.

RESPONSIBLE 36 yr. old man, 2 yrs. experience of mixed farming, taking up conservation post seeks accommodation with bicycling/bus distance of Oxford, 3 yr. min. period. Separate accommodation on farm or with

community with work offered in (partial?) exchange for rent ideal.

DO YOU believe in extraterrestrial life? UFOs, ghosts, fairies, things unexplained? If so our comprehensive directory of UFO and strange phenomena societies, groups and publications is for you. Price £1 inclusive from: UFO Network, 2 St Ivain Court, London N10.

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- 39 Communes: Co-operative work; Fairground; Christiania; Communes & anarchism; Pearce's polemic; US Windpower Inc.; Scandinavian AT.
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ACCESS: UC is cobbled together on Wednesday evenings from 7 pm on; anyone is welcome to come along: the business meetings proper start at 8 and adjourn about 9:30 to the back bar of the Crown Tavern. The office is not staffed at other times *but* our new subscriptions co-ordinator, Simon Woodhead, will be working in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays *and* there is often a member of the collective in the office on the other days of the week around 2 o'clock opening the mail. Please note that, human nature being what it evidently is, a letter, particularly if accompanied by an sae, is more likely to be answered than a scribbled invitation to phone back someone unknown.

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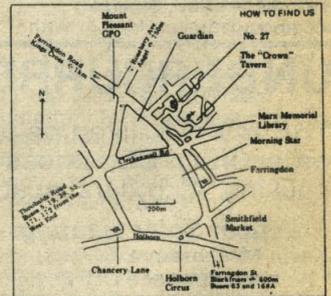
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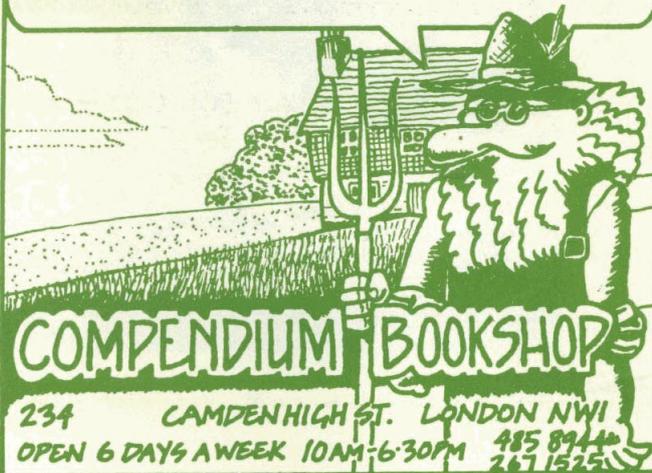
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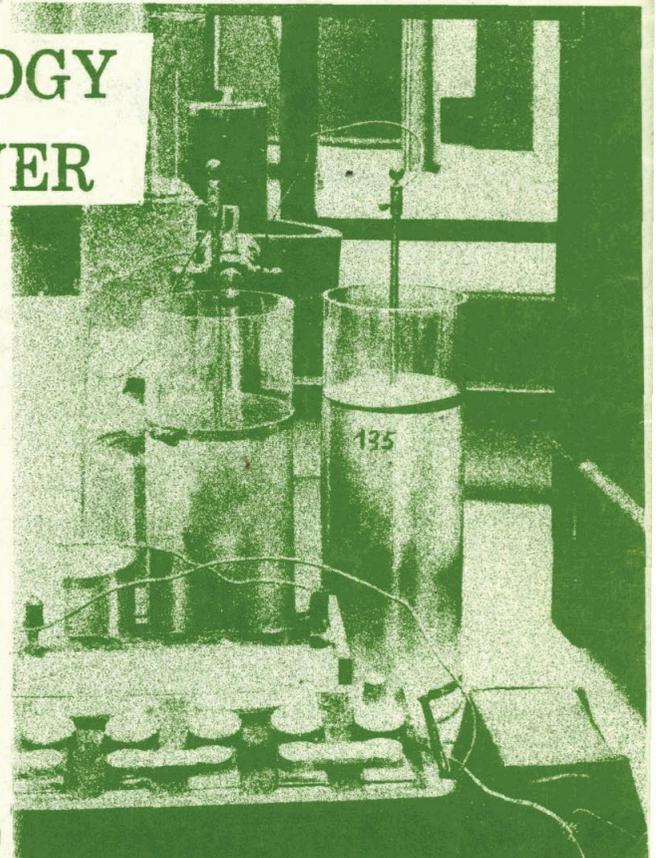
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