

The newsletter of the South Manchester Green Party.

Supplied Free to members. Two issues will be sent free to non members, after which an annual subscription costs £2 . Please contact the Membership Secretary whose address is printed on the back page.

Articles for publication are welcomed as long as they are consistent with the editorial policy printed on page two.

January 1988

AUSTRALIA



WHOSE CELEBRATION?

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EDITORIAL

Let me begin by saying 'Happy New Year'. I have faith that for Green politics it will be. Although the warnings of ecological disaster may have appeared negative and often fallen on deaf ears in the past, I feel that we have reached a stage now where many of these ideas are becoming accepted, both by politicians and the public in general. We now have the opportunity, as a movement, to put forward solutions rather than point to the symptoms.

The growing number of television programmes, newspaper articles and 'green' magazines are witness to the fact that people are becoming more knowledgeable and more interested. 'Greenness' is also, as promised, making inroads across the political spectrum. The proposed traffic light conference (red, orange, green), even if it doesn't materialise, illustrates the desire of many to realign and challenge today's politics, indeed Simon Hughes and other Liberals have expressed the desire to call themselves 'Green'.

Over the next couple of months we really need to pull together. The whole system is falling apart round our ears. We have never had an opportunity like this. The problems which are showing so strongly now cannot be remedied using traditional methods of education, production, health-care etc. The Green Message will shine like a beacon.

But we must be seen and heard. If anyone has ideas on election strategy, meetings, events, fundraising or anything which will enable us to get right to the heart of the electorate by May, then now is the time to make that suggestion and help the few active people who are struggling to keep this branch afloat. We can do well in May if everyone contributes just a little. Please, let's do it! For South Manchester.

Bruce

I recently received through the post a communication from "Sunuser Ltd." offering me the "opportunity to have a subsidised solar heating system". I know nothing of this company and would like to hear from anybody who knows anything of them or has received a similar communication. Their head office is at 157 Buslingthorpe Lane, Leeds LS7 2DQ, and they have a registered office at 129-137, Stamford Hill, London N16 5LQ.

There will be no news sheet this time, the next edition of City Green will be out for the beginning of March.

EDITORIAL POLICY To promote the ideals of a Green society, to inform of relevant events and ideas and to act as a forum for any group or individual who in the view of the editorial collective is/are likely to be influenced by or contribute to the development of Green thought ΔΔΔ To encourage and facilitate the development of local Green party policy ΔΔΔ To encourage the formation and development of local parties and Green groups in Greater Manchester ΔΔΔ To encourage greener lifestyles ΔΔΔ No view will be expressed which fosters prejudice or discrimination against any section of the community ΔΔΔ Notice will be given of editorial collective meetings, which all members and supporters will be welcome to attend ΔΔΔ

POLL TAX

When elected in 1979 The Conservative Party pledged to overhaul the rating system and produce a fairer one in its place. The theory was that the new "fairer" system would iron out the anomalies of people on opposite sides of streets paying different rates.

Its systematic attacks on local government have now enabled it to use the further argument that people would, under poll tax, ensure that local council expenditure became accountable.

The truth or not of this statement is largely irrelevant: since the inception of our systems of taxation never have governments permitted us to decide on allocations of tax revenues. Rather the implications are that the white heterosexual majority will not allow "special treatment" for minorities. The implications are in fact horrendous.

When seen in parallel with the Government's recent attack on "gay propaganda" this in fact constitutes a huge setback for the rights of a section of society which was for a long time hidden, and to a large extent still is. You probably have some gay friends in fact who haven't even told you. Just as our society was reaching the point where being gay was nothing to get over-anxious about, AIDS came along and blew everything apart.

But I've wandered off the point a little: the poll tax is a huge con: it has nothing to do with equality except equal treatment for the equally desperate: it will attack the young and the old, the poor and the very poor. With (further) Government changes in social security soon EVERYONE will have to pay at least 20% of rates (then the poll tax if it's implemented), putting a great burden on some - it will inevitably force more people out of their homes. Meanwhile Mr & Mrs Thatcher, in their lavish Dulwich retirement home will be about £2000 per year better off. At the same time millions of families have less than £2000 to spend after buying food alone. They will be worse off!

Many people will doubtless not register to vote. Even the Government figures assume the cost of chasing up these people and administering the poll tax will be ridiculously high compared to rates; we will be throwing away 25% of what we collect. The Government has stated that the electoral register will not be used when collecting the "community charge", in an attempt to distance itself from the more apt "poll tax". They say library cards, bus-pass applications and other records will be used. Surely it would be easier to use the electoral register? Never mind. The Government has also denied the suggestion that personal identity cards, issued to every person, are also up the pipeline. Not long ago Cecil Parkinson denied that the electricity industry would be privatised.

I haven't covered all the reasons to oppose the poll tax here. In the near future I'm sure we'll hear a lot more about it. The Green Party is opposed to it and, with your support, will be working to see that it is not implemented. Never in this country's history has a poll tax been successfully levied - it was tried 600 years ago. It failed then by popular demand and the King was forced to accept the rebels' demands. The power structure of our society is slightly different these days but the people of Britain can defeat it. Nowhere else in the World has such a system succeeded.

Following the public meeting we had recently, a press release was sent to the "South Manchester Reporter" in which it was stated that "should the Government proceed with the proposals, against the wishes of most of the British people, the Green Party will call for a campaign of civil disobedience. This will involve refusal to pay poll tax, whilst continuing to register to vote; refusers will offer to pay for local government by different means, to demonstrate that this is civil disobedience and not tax evasion."

BUT let us not forget that the Government will be working on "variations" to cover our objections.

AUSTRALIA - WHO'S CELEBRATION?

As we are all aware, the Australian Bicentennial 'Celebrations' have arrived. Already, in the pre-Christmas hype, Fosters Lager have made the point on their advertising hoardings. So what has this got to do with us?

Two hundred years ago the first white settlers arrived on the South East coast of Australia and declared the continent a 'barren land', which meant that there were no people there, just flora, fauna and land ready for the taking.

This declaration made the subsequent systematic slaughter, torture, rape, imprisonment and persecution of the Aboriginal people lawful. The rich lands around the coasts were taken from the Aboriginal inhabitants and put into the hands of the new colonial government and private settlers. It is estimated that over 2 million black people were killed, not because they fought back, but because it was convenient - after all, a dead person cannot own land.

Aboriginal people are not recognised under the Australian Constitution. They have no rights either as owners of land or as citizens of Australia, in spite of the fact that the oldest examples of human artistic expression are to be found on Aboriginal sacred land and are thought to be over 100,000 years old.

The 'pass laws' used by the Australian Government earlier this century to control the movement of Aboriginals were later used as the model for the South African laws under Apartheid. In the past two years, at least 90 Aboriginal people have died in police custody, more than in South Africa.

The Aboriginal people continue to live in 'Third World' conditions, moved from their traditional land into homelands or reservations. Baby and infant mortality is on a par with that in many 'Third World' countries and the life expectancy of Aboriginals is vastly below that of white Australians.

Health care and education is also vastly inferior to that of the white population, indeed only recently have Aboriginal children been taught of their own history and culture, instead of the 200 year old history of white colonialism.

The movement of the Aboriginal peoples into certain areas has allowed multinational mining companies to exploit the mineral wealth beneath the Aboriginal lands, many of which are sacred. Some of the uranium mined is used in nuclear weapons, which are then shipped back to Australia and tested on yet more Aboriginal lands. In one notable case, the people living in a test area were not told and, as a result, many have died of radiation sickness and cancers.

In this year of 'celebration' for white Australia, the fight for land rights continues. Prime Minister Bob Hawke proposed that white Australians should acknowledge past injustices to the Aboriginal peoples before the 'celebrations'. The response from certain parties, including multinationals, right wingers and even from within Bob Hawke's own Labour Party has been hostile.

Instead of amending the original constitution to recognise that Aboriginal people were there before the Europeans, Bob Hawke reduced his offer to a watered down 'compact', whilst in response the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has taken the brave step of boycotting the 'celebrations' after pressure from Aboriginal groups.

The Hawke Government is fearful of the embarrassment that such boycotts will cause during the 'celebrations' if the appalling state of the Aboriginal people is exposed to the rest of the world. The subsequent possibilities of massive Aboriginal claims for compensation has frightened the Government and their bedfellows. Mining companies and other multinationals have further swayed Hawke into backing out of his election promises to the Aboriginal people.

The whole situation, born out of imperialism, racism, greed and oppression, makes the 'celebrations' irrelevant and insulting to Aboriginal people and they have requested that people boycott the 'celebrations'.

Steph Moans

THEIR PARTY

If someone burnt down your home, murdered your family, raped the women as well.

Then put on a party and asked you to come - Would you be partners in this?

Well that's what happened in '88 - nearly two hundred years ago. And that party is not long off.

So don't sell our souls for the white man's gold Let him eat alone.

Norm Newlin

Although this probably arrived after the demo on 26th look out for other events.

TRANSPORT

A few weeks ago we held an informal discussion on transport. In the future we plan to have meetings on other subjects. I hope people will feel free to come along, both to learn and to teach. Meetings will hopefully give rise to policy formation, campaigning, press releases etc.

We discussed a wide range of issues, both general and specific. Sometimes conclusions could be drawn, other times we could point to improvements.

Firstly it should be noted that in a green society there would be far less need for transport; there would be reductions in transportation of goods, reductions in levels of commuting and less need to travel to obtain goods. Therefore we have to balance the long term needs for moves towards local, sustainable economies with short term needs of reducing congestion and improving safety and amenability, within the current framework.

The council is spending a lot of money on widening and improving certain roads to create a ring road around the city CENTRE. The planning department's priority is to move traffic around as quickly as possible, thus encouraging it.

However, only a small percentage of Manchester's residents have access to a car, so the emphasis should be away from their use. We therefore applaud the council's policy of discouraging parking in the city centre. But there need to be more pedestrian areas, more cycle-lanes and a full revision of bus routes and pricing and even of the vehicles themselves, taking into consideration the needs of the elderly, the disabled and mothers with children.

We totally oppose out-of-town 'shopping cities' because they discriminate against the non-car-owning majority, encourage needless travel for those with cars and will inevitably run down local shops and communities, as well as encroaching on greenbelt land.

There are plans for a tramlike system in the city centre, which we favour. However the Light Rapid Transit system will not be completed for several years - who knows what kind of congestion we will have by then? There must be plans to combat this congestion - promotion of train travel, cycling, and car and taxi-sharing. This Government however does not help the situation: company car subsidies exceed public transport subsidies!

The council should follow European initiatives (as they have started to in Leicester), by preventing through-traffic in residential areas. It should also improve many road junctions for cyclists and pedestrians.

We are also opposed to the plans to expand the airport. There is no need for it. We also oppose the notion of a Channel Tunnel: it will destroy Kent simply for Mrs Thatcher's glory and profit for a few. It cannot be emphasised more that the profit of the Channel Tunnel Group is the prime motivation - a very powerful pressure group indeed! Money.

Future meetings and issues of City Green will examine specific aspects of transport with the aim of influencing council policy..
.....if they don't get around to it fast enough.

The last discussion on 'Health' was poorly attended. Perhaps this was due to it not being publicised since before Christmas.

If you'd like another one on health - a "key issue" for the next month at least, it seems - then get in touch with Bruce.

A Message from our Press Officer:

I have had several dealings with our local rag, the 'South Manchester Reporter' recently. We have already had two turns in the 'political slot' on the letters page. A recent press release on our strong opposition to the poll tax was also given good coverage to the point of being exaggerated; we were only calling for civil disobedience not civil disorder as the headline proclaimed - it will be interesting to see what reaction (if any) there will be to that. I welcome any feedback from readers on the sort of image you think we should be projecting in the media.

The result of that press release, plus acchat with reporter Peter Bossley brings home the extent to which we fail to use the 'Reporter'. Most 'letters to the Editor' get printed, unless too rambling or obscene, so there is an excellent chance to get our views across to 140,000 people. Anyone can write a letter as an individual but if you write one and sign it as representing the Green Party, please check it with either Colin or myself before sending it.

Finally, I need help if we are to develop better use of all the local media; you may have noticed my name against several 'jobs' on the back of this newsletter - I would like to see a 'press and publicity' task group. Please contact me as soon as possible if you want to be part of this exciting new team.

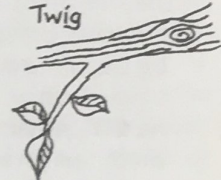
Brian Candeland.

Any BOOKS WANTED

BY THE



Levenshulme
Twig



Contact:

Alan and Linda
or any other twigling

green action panel

TWIGS

Hello, this is me as your twig co-ordinator here.

There is now one twig in operation as of this moment, well done Levenshulme. There are also two prototwigs, one in the Barlow moor area and one in Whalley Range/Chorlton. Where are the rest of you?

It is of vital importance that we get these prototwigs going and start other ones in other parts of Manchester. If we don't do this we might as well give up and stay at home, which is what we are doing mostly anyway.

As a decentralist party we must be more in touch with local issues, and twigs are the way of doing it. It is also a way of getting you involved. If people are not going to get things going how are we to achieve our shared objective, after all if you didn't believe in a green future why did you join the Green Party? If we all donated one hour per week to green activities we would get so much more done than we do at the moment, that people would begin to believe we are capable of winning elections, changing the world, and saving the planet.

Ask not what the green party can do for you but what you can do for the party.

yours in peace John F. Kennedy.

Report on the NW Area Conference on January 16th, by Colin Kirby

This was the first ever Area Conference held in the city of Manchester. If a large turnout was expected then we were sorely disappointed, as only between 20 and 30 people turned out.

Despite a 12-00 noon start to allow people to get there, the meeting started slightly later than scheduled, with a one hour chunk of business which included the elections for the two unfilled Area posts-Press Officer and Area contact. Both posts only had one person standing for them so it was no surprise to find that they both won. George Bowler, who already holds the two posts of Treasurer and Membership Secretary added a third as Area contact, while Chris White became the Press Officer despite making a wholly unnecessary speech on why we should elect him.

After lunch we had two sets of two simultaneous workshops. The first pair were on Greening the local community and the idea of a Futures conference. I can only speak for the Greening the local community work shop which had no new ideas but merely emphasised the need to make sure we get the message across in all our activities.

The other pair were on the European elections and the concept of a Northern Green party. In the Euro-elections we have 5 seats definitely to be contested, leaving 5 more yet to be done. The Northern Green party concept still has a long way to go yet.

The last session consisted of the rest of the business carried over from before lunch.



Hello its me again wearing my election coordinator's hat.

There are several elections on the horizon: those in May for the city council, and slightly further in the future, the Euro-elections.

For the May elections we need candidates now. We probably will be able to cover more wards this time than ever before probably 14, so hy not consider putting your self forward as a potential candidate. Its not as bad as it sounds as most will be paper candidates, involving little work, and no personal risk. Please ,please let me know immediately if you are willing to help. Put down this newsletter, pick up the phone and do it (you'll get me care of Bruce). Now !

Well that wasn't so bad was it.

It is our intention to field a Euro-candidate in the 1989 elections, in Manchester Central. This is part of the NW area strategy to have as near a complete slate as possible so as to garner press coverage. It will require vast sums of money and effort to put up a credible campaign, start savng both now. We will soon be selecting a candidate, if you want to be considered...



WANT TO BE A EURO-CANDIDATE?

You must send your nomination to Brian Candeland by February 29th (see contacts for address). This must include a statement that you are willing to stand, with your signature and the signatures of both a proposer and a seconder, who must be members and live in the constituency (City of Manchester and Borough of Trafford).

D I A R Y

contacts

January 30 Paper collection at the usual place. Contact Hugh to offer your help.

February 1 Business meeting - At Colin's 7-30pm

February 3 Levenshulme twig meeting at Alan and Linda's 8pm

February 4 War on Want Public meeting "Poverty: South Africa and the frontline states" an illustrated talk by Tess Kingham, National Appeals Officer of War On Want and talk by Liam Black, recently returned from South Africa. Town Hall 7-30 pm.

February 11 Editorial collective meeting Bruce's 8-00pm. If no-one turns up there will be no more newsletters.

February 20 Rally against Clause 28 of the Local Government Bill. Meet at All Saints 1pm, Festival 3pm.

February 22 Green Party Public Meeting, Talk by Granville Williams from the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. White Swan, Green Street, Ladybarn 7-30pm.

March 16 to 23 Central America Week. Various events.

March 19 Green Fair, Altrincham and Sale Green Party. Sale Civic Theatre, adjacent to Sale Town Hall, 10am-4pm.

There were few people at the recent discussion meeting on Health. In view of the current situation this was rather surprising. If you would like to participate in another meeting on health, please contact Bruce.

If anyone knows of anything else going on please activate the telephone network .-

to:-

Mr Alain Kahan
201 Slade Lane
Levenshulme
MANCHESTER M19 2AE

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Please note that some of these have changed and that in most cases help is required in the task group surrounding the post.

Branch contact / secretary
Brian Candeland 28 Tintern Ave,
W. Didsbury (434 7116)

Fundraising / treasurer
Guy Otten , 21 Ballbrook Av. , M20
(445 0219)

Membership , materials ,FLUORIDE
Steve & Beryl Clarke , 82 Milwain
Rd , Levenshulme (225 1347)

Newsletter editorial collective
c/o Bruce Bingham , 9 Whalley
Grove , W.Range (227 9167)

Press & publicity
Brian Candeland as above

Elections and twig co-ordinator
Colin Kirby , flat 1 , 16/18 Whalley
Rd. W.Range

Paper collections
Hugh Walters, 60 Mauldeth Rd
West , Withington (434 9239)

Recruitment
Joseph Otten , 30 Kirkmanshulme
Lane, Longsight (256 2201)

Levenshulme twig contacts:
Alan and Linda King, 21 Windsor Rd.
Levenshulme (224 7122)

Telephone network
Mary Candeland , as for Brian
above .

If you want to be kept in touch
with what's going on join the
network now!

Membership rates

low/unwaged	£5-00
standard	£10-00
joint	£15-00
joint-low	£8-00