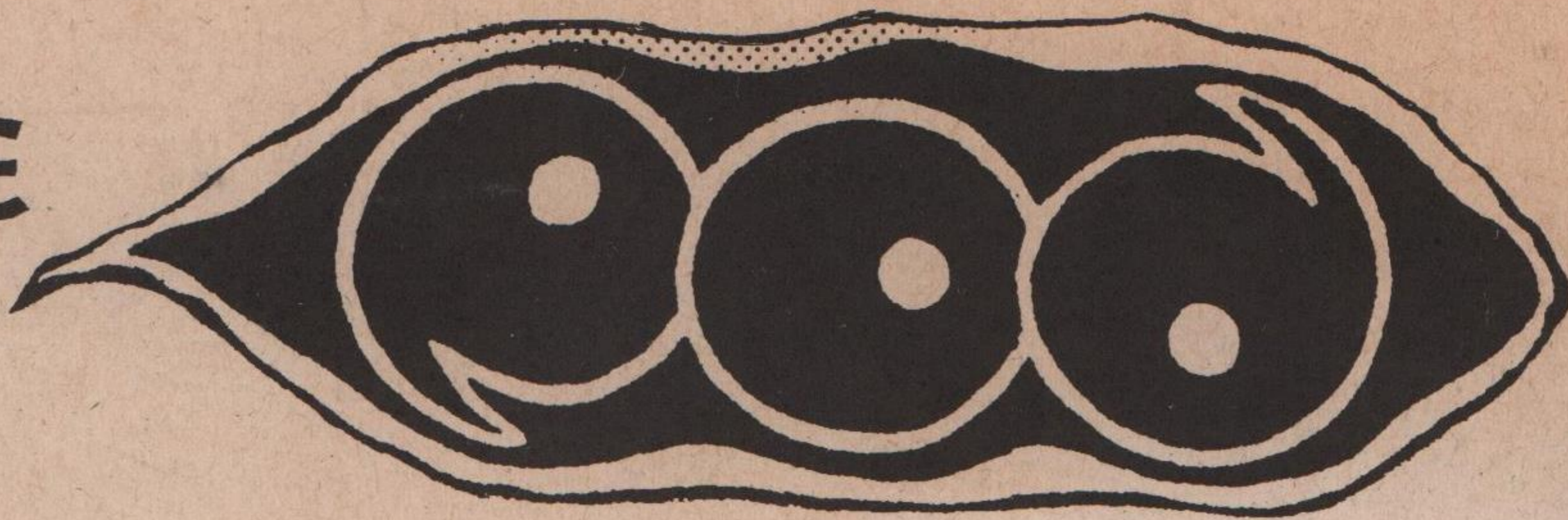


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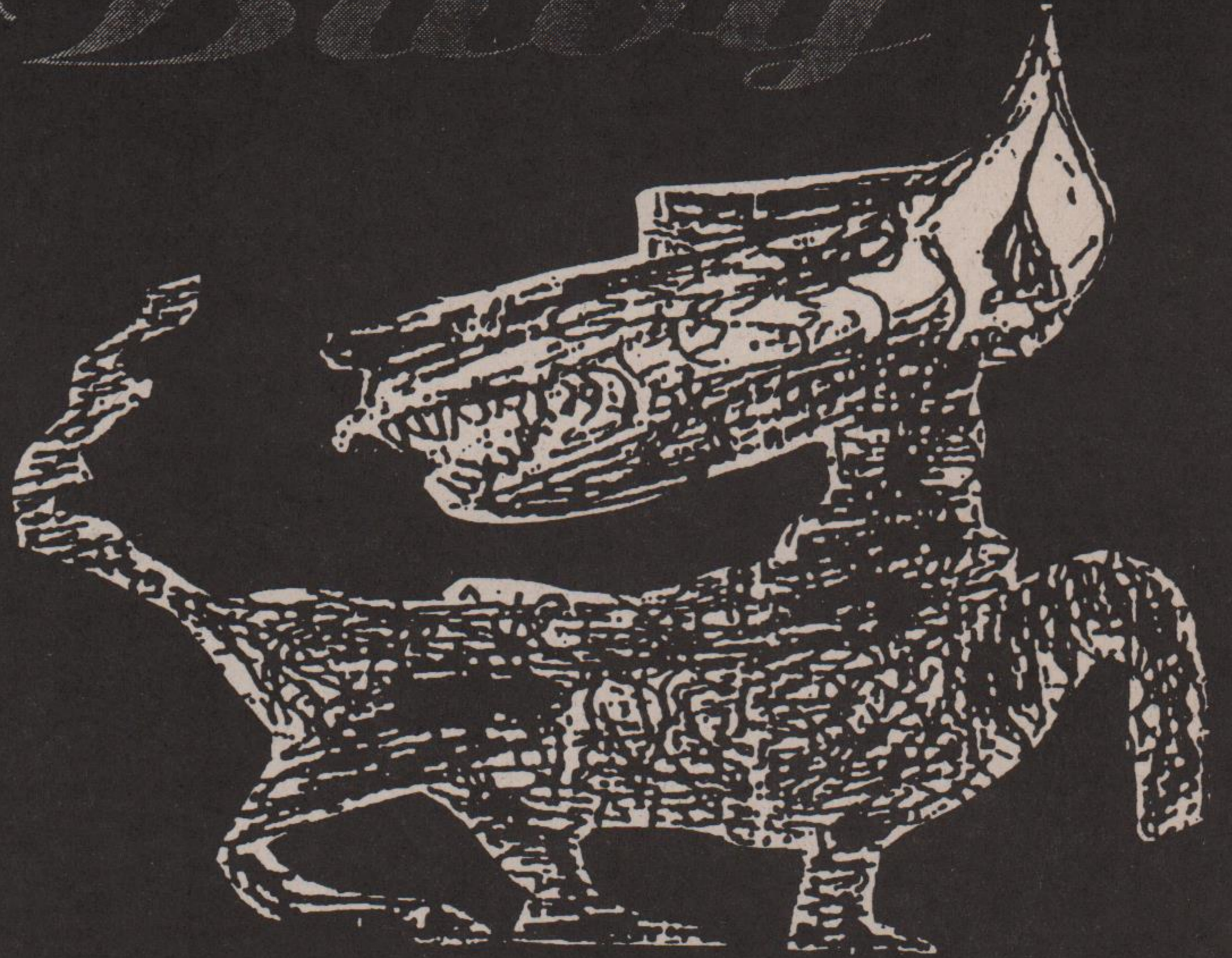
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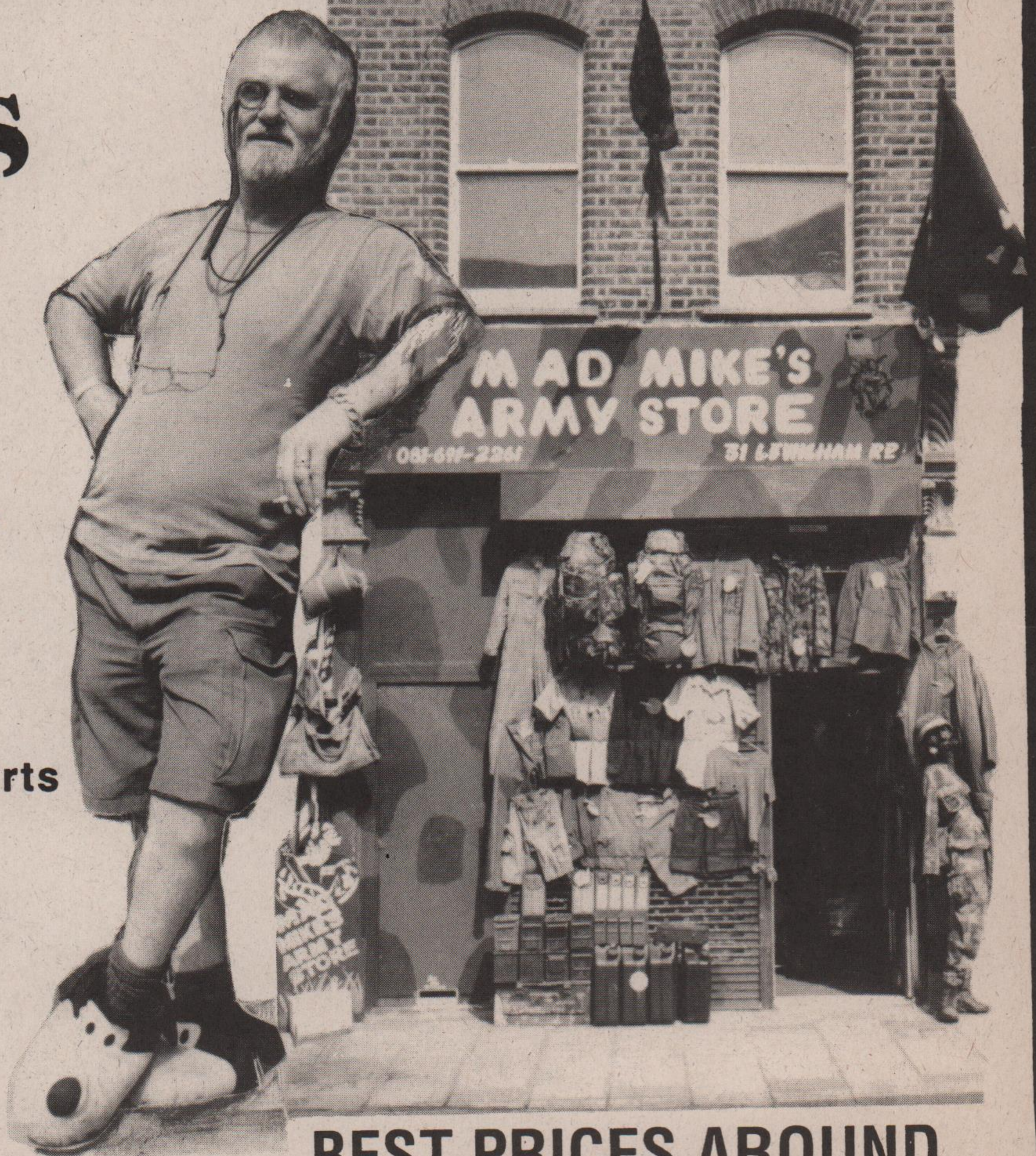
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# PEOPLE POWER

# WHERE POD'S

# COMING FROM...

Have you noticed the wind?' someone asked Miss Pod recently. 'It's strange isn't it. It's kind of exciting and kind of unsettling at the same time.' Some won't have it but many people Miss Pod's been speaking to recently identify the strange gales that have been whipping across the country as the winds of change.

One thing for sure, change is the word on everyone's lips at the moment. It's a strange situation. On the one hand, we have a country where people's powers have been slowly worn away leaving them feeling isolated, frustrated and angry. A feeling that there's no way to voice their discontent.

On the other hand, there's an amazing surge of energy coming from many different areas. At the roots of this is us. It's our generation that is leading the way and building up a voice that is saying 'Enough is Enough'.

The Government has systematically scapegoated the most deprived members of our society in order to take the focus away from reactionary policies that have no place in 1990s Britain. But when they picked on our generation and introduced the Criminal Justice Bill in order to criminalise alternative lifestyles and the new tide of dissent, the words on everyone's lips were, 'They've picked on the wrong people this time.'

The Bill was designed to silence us, but it has only brought the DIY generation closer together. The Government forgets we've got some formidable weapons; namely youth, energy and vision. What have they got? Only more of the same. But more importantly, we've got the edge. Our strongest weapon is Non-Violent Direct Action. Peaceful resistance has proved to be the key to highlighting some of the major issues of our time. It worked for Ghandi. It worked for the Suffragettes. It's working for us. In this issue Miss Pod traces the origins of this new movement and talks to some of the groups on the front line of change. Perhaps things will have to get worse before they get better but with courage and determination, we can make a difference. Watch the sky and tread lightly.

ISSUE

5

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# FOOD

NEWS AND VIEWS FREE



## RAINBOWHEMIA HITS KENTISH TOWN

Here's a lesson in perseverance. After spending two years trying to find a base, the Rainbow Tribe has finally managed to get permission to set up their One World Rainbow Centre in a former church in Highgate Road, Kentish Town.

Pete and his fellow tribespeople have so far squatted five empty properties including the site for a McDonald's restaurant in Hampstead, a former BCCI bank in Marble Arch, a five storey town house in Park Lane, a group of houses owned by the University of London and a former Salvation Army office. All of the squats ended in eviction.

Now it looks like the Church of England will allow the Tribe to stay at their new location - for the time being anyway. Maurice, a local rector pops in from time to time and has given a slide show on his work with native tribes in South America. The Church is still encouraging prospective buyers but as Pete points out, 'There's the Forum concert venue on one side and a fire station on the other, so it's pretty noisy. They've brought along Portuguese Christians, Egyptian Christians, all sorts of Christians but these days, they just haven't got enough Christians to go around.'

Since the beginning of the year, the Tribe has been busy turning the church into an environmental/arts community centre. When POD paid a visit recently, the Tribe had set up a large but cozy communal kitchen with their own recycling information and separate bins to divide up rubbish. Most of the communal food is collected from supermarket skips and reject fruit and veg is collected from markets. There always seems to be a big pot of veggie stew on the boil.

In the main section of the church, a strange selection of bender bedrooms have been set up between the pews. Pete's bedroom is behind the organ pipes upstairs. A tent-like roof made up of draped strips of material and the selection of cushion and rugs over the floor, gives it a distinctly Bedouin feel.

The Tribe now has its own office, art room and meditation space. Offshore State Circus and their double-decker bus wintered the back yard together with chickens, children and three-legged dog.

The Rainbow Centre was also the venue for an alternative press conference held by the many groups opposed to the Criminal Justice Bill. The pews were filled with probably the most alternative congregation the church has ever seen; Anti-roads campaigners, travellers, hunt saboteurs, the Stonehenge Campaign (who set out their exhibition on boards in the shape of the stones) the Pagan Federation and the Dragon Environmental Group. Hopefully this is the start of great things. Blessed be.

If you want to find out more or get involved, contact the One World Rainbow Centre on (071) 267-0828.



# NEWS

## DM HERE AND THERE.....

### WHAT INTELLIGENCE?

Perhaps the least well kept secret among the members of Wiltshire Constabulary is a bulletin by the Southern Intelligence Unit. Although the bulletin is labelled, 'This Document Is Confidential. For Police Eyes Only,' it has been widely distributed among campaign groups. And no wonder they wanted to keep it away from the prying public. The bulletin gives details of 'Operation Snapshot', a county to county account of travellers' movements and festival activities. Under 'West Mercia', the report refers to the Castlemorton Court Case in which 10 people stood trial for causing a public nuisance at the Castlemorton festival in 1992. The report concludes: 'There is no support for the defendants at the Court, they are all on their own. Ah!!!' So much for police impartiality. The defendants must have had some support as they were all cleared! Taxpayers won't be so happy though. The three month trial is thought to have cost around £4million. Subsequent pages of the bulletin list the successes and failures of stopping raves and spying on traveller camps around the country. A certain P.C. Alder from Surrey Constabulary is quote as saying that Surrey police's policy is, 'that Raves will not happen, illegal or otherwise.'

What planet are these people on?

### SUSPENDER SENTENCE FOR DONGA PROTESTER

Some people might be daunted by the prospect of facing a hearing at the High Court but not Dongas tribesman Graeme Lewis. Graeme appeared in court to face a civil charge of breaking an injunction banning him from the site of the M3 road-building on Twyford Down. To show his feelings for the injunction, Graeme stripped down to stockings and suspenders - before popping a plastic bag over his head. The message: what's good enough for deceased tory MP Stephen Milligan is good enough for him. (Milligan was MP for Eastleigh, just round the corner from Twyford Down). Unimpressed, the judge jailed him for four months. Graeme was the 10th person to be imprisoned for campaigning against the Government's £20 billion road building scheme.

### ECO-WARRIORS THROUGH THE LENS...

Road, a photographic exhibition that charts the story of the new anti-roads movement from Twyford Down to the present day, is touring the country.

Birmingham-based photographer Nigel Dickinson has spent a lot of time with eco-warriors and his work gives a powerful insight into their lives and beliefs. Look out for Road coming to a space near you.

### MIXMASTER MORRIS GOSSIP

News from his Ambience Mixmaster Morris. Apparently there is a Spanish DJ who uses a stylus made from ice! Why? For added chill? Who Knows. Following on from couch potatoes, Morris tells up that apparently computer-junkies are now known as mouse-potatoes.

### MORRIS'S ALL TIME TOP TEN AMBIENT CLASSIC ALBUMS.

1. Steve Hillage: Rainbow Dome Music
2. Terry Riley: Rainbow in Curved Air
3. Kraftwerk: Ralph and Florian
4. Harmonia: Music From Harmonia
5. White Noise: Electric Storm in Hell
6. Edgar Froese (the talented one in Tangerine Dream!) Aqua
7. Ambient 3: Enø and Laraaji
8. Tonto's Expanding Headband: Zero Time
9. Steve Reich: Music For 18 Musicians
10. Robert Wyatt: Rock Bottom (pure undiluted English Hippiedom)

### PUBLIC PUBIC'S

Following on from an article on Brixton's CoolTan Arts collective in the last issue, POD received a letter from Candy, one of the models in CoolTan's 'Sign On' fashion show. In the feature, we said that some of the models wore hair extensions made out of pubic hair.

Candy would like it to be known that in fact, they were normal hair extensions attached to the models' pubic hair. She enclosed this slightly censored photo to illustrate her point. Cheers Candy.



### UGLY MUGLYS

Thanks to Maria from Forest Hill for sending in this cutting from Jamaica's Weekend Star.

## WHICH PARISH PRODUCES THE 'UGLIEST' MEN?



**VERA DONALDSON KINGSTON.** If you want to witness ugly man go to Kingston. I stand up a Downtown Parade one day and see a little short man in a three-piece brown suit - is the ugliest man a ever see. A laugh so till the conductor almost take me off the bus.

**CARDELLA RICHARDS** Last week the man them dissed we woman so teck yu medicine. The ugliest man them come from Hang-over. Is like fi them ugliness HANG-OVER more than the rest of parishes.

**MARLENE BOGLE** St. CATHERINE. I went down to a certain place near the sea and is the ugliest man dem ah ever see. Yu know sea lion. Some a the men resemble that and God horse, one ugly insect yu find on pimento seed.

**TANEISHA WILLIAMS KINGSTON.** This is the parish with the ugliest men. If me did ugly like the men I see in Kingston I would sue my mother and me would win the case too. And if those men form fool all the ludge would sue them for them double ugliness.

**THERESA WILLIAMS KINGSTON.** If I did ugly like some of the man a see a Kingston I would take off mi head and stone it. Patoo a sweet boy to most a de man them in Kingston.

**PAULA GRAHAM** St CATHERINE at a place call Old Harbour Bay. When dem de man laugh dem face fava pot cover and jackass cubby.

**KERRY-ANN GAYLE** St. Catherine. I decided to sleep with a St. Catherine man one night and when him take off him clothes ina the night, him was so ugly a run left him naked in the room.

**SHARON BOOTHE** MOCHO in Clarendon has the ugliest man. Ever see Pink Panther (a cartoon character) is so some of the men them look and them dress just like Snagga Puss.



## McCool Dude

The giants had it easy. Reading a brochure about the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland, I discover that it was once inhabited by a giant called Finn McCool, who is said to have built the causeway to entice a giantess from across the seas. A rhyme dedicated to the giant goes like this: He lived most happy and content. Obeyed no law and paid no rent.'

## VEGGIE VICTORY

Good news for Vegetarians. Between 1988 and 1992, sales of vegetarian food increased by 26% to £11.1 billion. Organic produce sales grew more than four fold to £92.5 million. The number of meat-free eaters is now estimated at around four million of Britain's population. This compares with just 0.2 million at the end of the Second World War. Keep vegging!

## RAVER SAVER

A gold star to Sunnyside party organisers. The group has been giving out special 'Raver Savers' at their parties. The small plastic clip-bag contains: a sticker, a tiny leaflet about the Criminal Justice Bill, roach-card, Rizla, matches, chewing gum, multivit pill and cannabis seed.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pod award for most innovative used of this mag goes to Simon Moore from Perthshire who managed to barter his copy of Pod for a pound of mature cheddar. More canny barterers very welcome.

## GREEN POST

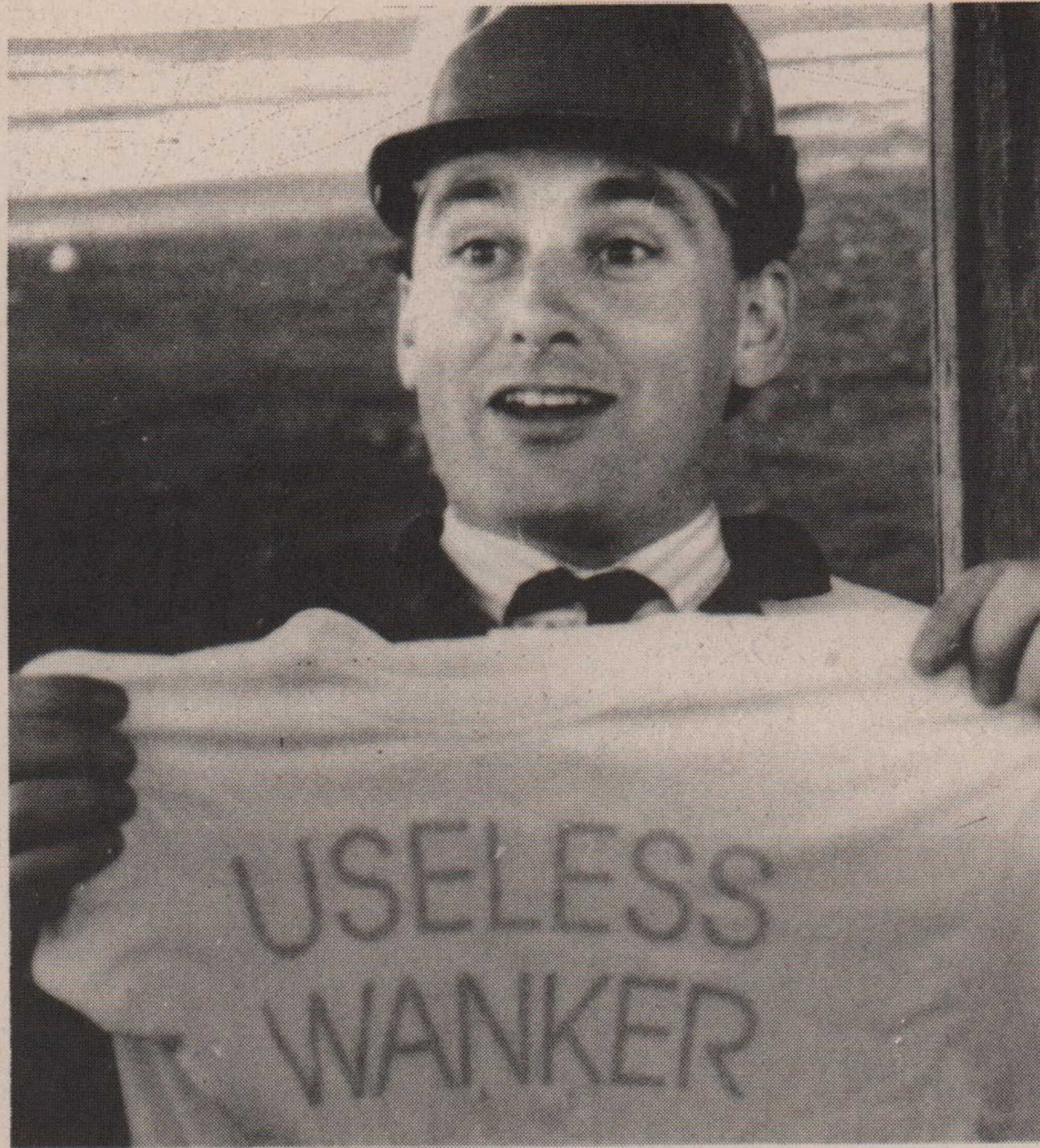
Great to see the number of people sending stuff to Pod in recycled envelopes. Refuse, reuse, recycle, repair, RELAX!

## PODALERT!

Miss Pod is on a quest to find some wonderful people to help gather advertising for this mag. If you'd like to see Pod grow and sprout in new directions and have some experience in linking up with like-minded groups who are interested in advertising, please, please get in touch. That goes for all you potential advertisers out there too! (All rates negotiable). Write to Miss Pod, PO Box, London SE4 1SW.

## MOLE JAILED?

Ever wondered what happened to angst-ridden teenager Adrian Mole? Probably not. But Miss Pod has been wondering if Mole's unrequited teenage years turned him into a wrong 'un. Recently she notice an newspaper article saying that one Adrian Mole, 43, was jailed for a record 28 years after repeatedly raping two young girls. The '20-stone monster' even video'd the attacks. Not a happy ending.



## NOT SO SHIRTY

During one of the No M11 Link Campaign's 'actions' in Wanstead, I bumped in Helen, a member of the Dongas Tribe. 'Come and watch this,' she said carrying a T-shirt. She approached one of the security guards and presented him with the T-shirt. Once the T-shirt was unfolded, I could clearly see the words, 'Useless Wanker' printed across the front. It turned out that the security man was one of the 'friendlies' and was game enough to pose for a picture with the said T-shirt. Just goes to show that even security men can be game for a laugh.

## SMALL WORLD GETS BIGGER

Small World video productions is looking for green campaign groups/individuals to share their new North London office space. There are five rooms available with rent ranging from £16-22 a week. £8 will get you a desk. All rents include rates and services.

\* Incidentally, if you're still wary about non-violent direct action, Small World's quarterly video magazine, *Undercurrents* will certainly put you in a positive frame of mind. An inspiring selection of 'actions' from around the country, including the No M11 Link Road Campaign, protests against the Criminal Justice Bill and a look at how the media portrays NVDA, *Undercurrents* Issue One is vital viewing for those who want to stay in touch with the grass-roots eco-scene. Truly moving stuff. For more information call Zoe or Jamie on (071) 272-5255.

## NEW LIFE NEEDED FOR COMMUNE

LIFESPAN, the community that produces the commune directory *Diggers and Dreamers* is looking for new members. Lifespan is a twenty year old community of 19 houses in the Yorkshire moors. They have three acres of land in the middle of the countryside. It's been going ten years and they are looking for people with energy and commitment to inject new blood into the community. For more info write with details of who you are what your interests are, to Lifespan Community, Townhead, Dunford Bridge, Sheffield, S30 6TG.

## RECOMMENDED EVENTS JULY

**30th:** Fordham Park Urban Free Festival, Fordham Park, New Cross. Not to be missed. A great festie.

**27th to 31st:** Big Green Gathering, 'The Green Event of The Year' held in the Vale of the White Horse, between Swindon and Oxford. Environmental Awareness, Alternative Technology, Green Politics, Craft Workshops, Green Market, Direct Action Training and more. Tickets £20 for adults, children free from The Big Green Gathering, PO Box 123, Salisbury, SP2 0YA..

## AUGUST

**12-13-14th:** Chill Out Highland Gala, Scottish Highlands. A free festival in beautiful countryside. An ambient bonanza with video graphics and sound sculptures. Includes a special debate on alternative lifestyles. For more information call Lynn or Pete on (071) 737-5301.

**19-20-21st:** Friendly Folk Fayre. Bands: Back To The Planet, RDF, Shriekback, Slightlydelic, The Great Imperial YoYo, Wizards of Twiddly and more. Proceeds to The Big Issue, MIND and The Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Advance Tickets only £20 (kids under 15 free). Tickets from Wayahead Ticket office, Birmingham and Nottingham; Rival Concert Tickets, Bristol; Penny lane Records, Chester; Cavendish Travel, Leeds; The Cream Shop, Liverpool; Piccadilly Box Office, London and Manchester; Derricks Records, Swansea.

## SEPTEMBER

**4th:** Greenpeace Fundraiser, Hulver Farm, St. Michael's South Elmham, Bungay, Suffolk. Bands, clowns, story tellers, stalls, etc. Phone 0379 640335 for more details.

**21st-30th:** Anarchy In The UK - 'Ten Days That Shook The World.' A look at Anarchy from 50s beatniks to today's free-thinkers. Participants include: Chumbawamba, members of Faslane Peace Camp, Mutoid Waste Company, Club Dog, The Sea and Exploding Cinema. Possibles include: Malcolm McLaren, Jello Biafra, The Levellers, Hawkwind, Bjork, Ozric Tentacles, John Cooper-Clarke, Allan Ginsberg, Back To The Planet and Benjamin Zephaniah. For more info sent SAE to Anarchy in the UK '94, PO BOX 1096, Bristol, BS99 1BW. (10-day festival pass £25.)

## NOVEMBER

London's Victoria and Albert Museum is attempting to cast off its fuddy-duddy image by putting on an exhibition celebrating street fashions from the 1940s to the present day. 'Street Style' will trace the history of different youth cultures or 'tribes'. It includes original clothes worn by the Dongas Tribe and features POD in its catalogue!

## SIGN OF THE TIMES

This sign was found in a communal garden in the heart of Tory Chelsea. The only thing they've missed out is NO FUN. Is this the kind of thing the Tories would like to plant in all our open spaces?

PRIVATE GARDEN  
NO DOGS  
NO CYCLING  
NO BALL GAMES  
NO MUSIC  
NO VANDALISM  
OBSERVE GARDEN RULES

## L.A. ROAR

News from Los Angeles. Jason aka Cinnamon Twist, is among a growing number of people trying to spread a deeper message to the new wave of raves-type party outfits in the USA. He has put together tapes of interesting thoughts from various persons both famous (G.I. Gurdjieff) and non-famous. He also publishes a newsletter of alternative information and US 'zines and newssheets. For a Tribal Donut \*1111 tape or general info, write to 41 Sutter Street, Box 1348, San Francisco, California, 94104.

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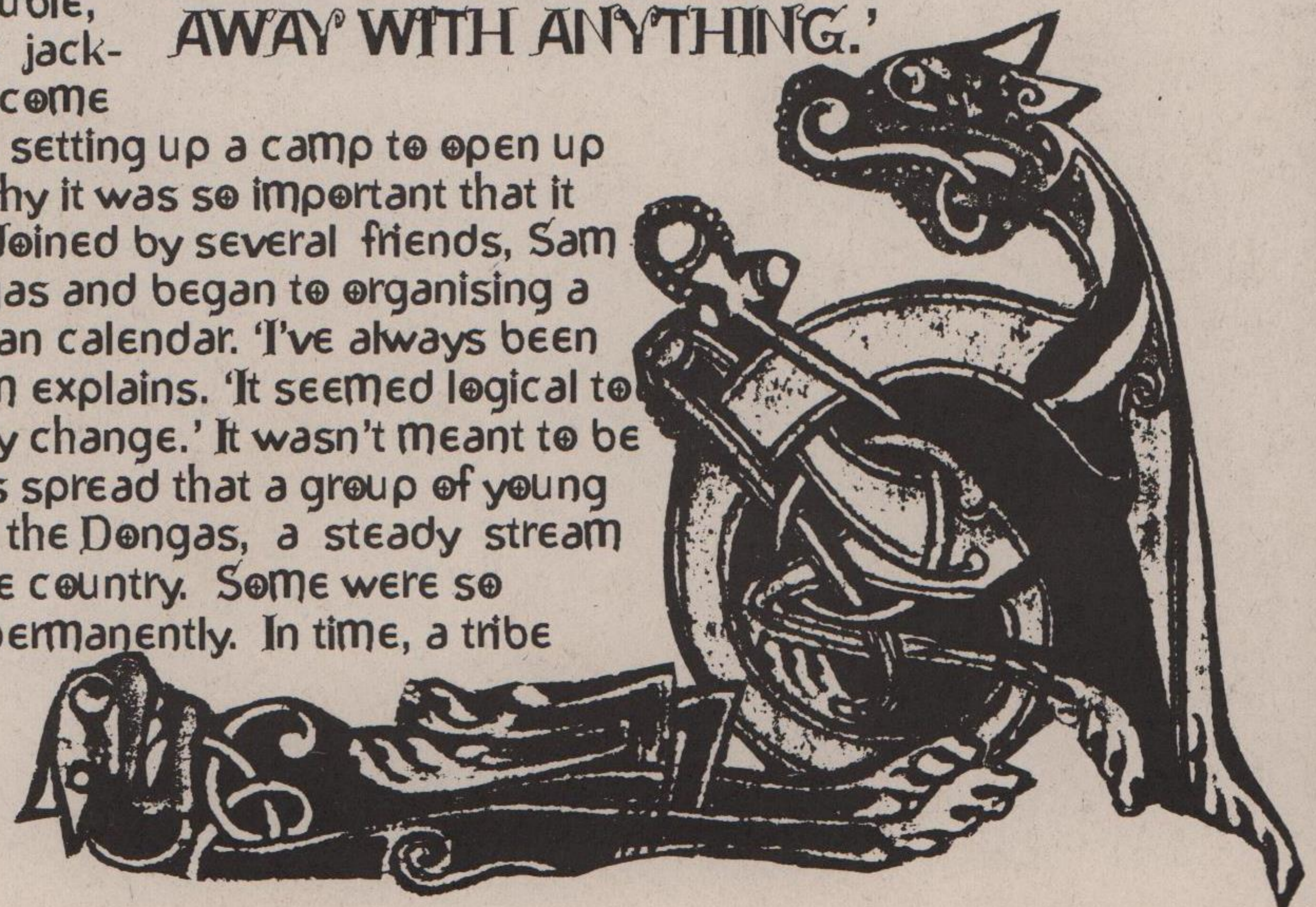
# Fine Roots

Once, Britain's fields were filled with cows. If the government has its way, our future countryside may well be filled with cars. But a new generation of grass-roots environmentalists is determined to make sure this grim picture never becomes a reality.

Many say that the story of the new eco-warriors began with the Dongas Tribe. The tale of the Dongas is in itself an unusual one. It started with one young couple. For some reason that they themselves find hard to explain, the Tribe's founder members, Sam and Steff, were drawn to Winchester, Middle England. In the months before they arrived, the pair had been living an idyllic existence working and travelling around the South of France. But something pulled them back to England. 'As soon as we arrived in Winchester, we began to bump into loads of interesting people and friends we hadn't seen for years,' says Sam. The pair soon learned that Twyford Down, a designated area of outstanding natural beauty outside Winchester, was under threat from an extension to the M3 motorway. At that point, Friends of The Earth had already set up a camp in the water meadows below the Dongas; a series of ancient trackways at the heart of the Down, worn deep into the hillside over thousands of years.

The mounds were said to be part of the tribal centre of Old Europe. 'I think the people at the F.O.E. camp saw us as traveller-types looking for trouble,' Sam recalls. 'They were all wax jackets and ties. We didn't feel welcome at all. We started talking about setting up a camp to open up the land again and tell people why it was so important that it was saved from the bulldozer.' Joined by several friends, Sam and Steff moved onto the Dongas and began to organising a series of events around the pagan calendar. 'I've always been interested in pagan beliefs,' Sam explains. 'It seemed logical to hold events at times of planetary change.' It wasn't meant to be a protest camp. But when news spread that a group of young people were living at the foot of the Dongas, a steady stream of visitors came from all over the country. Some were so inspired, they joined the camp permanently. In time, a tribe grew up.

**'THE SPIRIT SPREAD MUCH FURTHER THAN HAMPSHIRE. THE FEELING WAS THAT IF THEY COULD BULLDOZE TWYFORD DOWN, THEY COULD GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING.'**



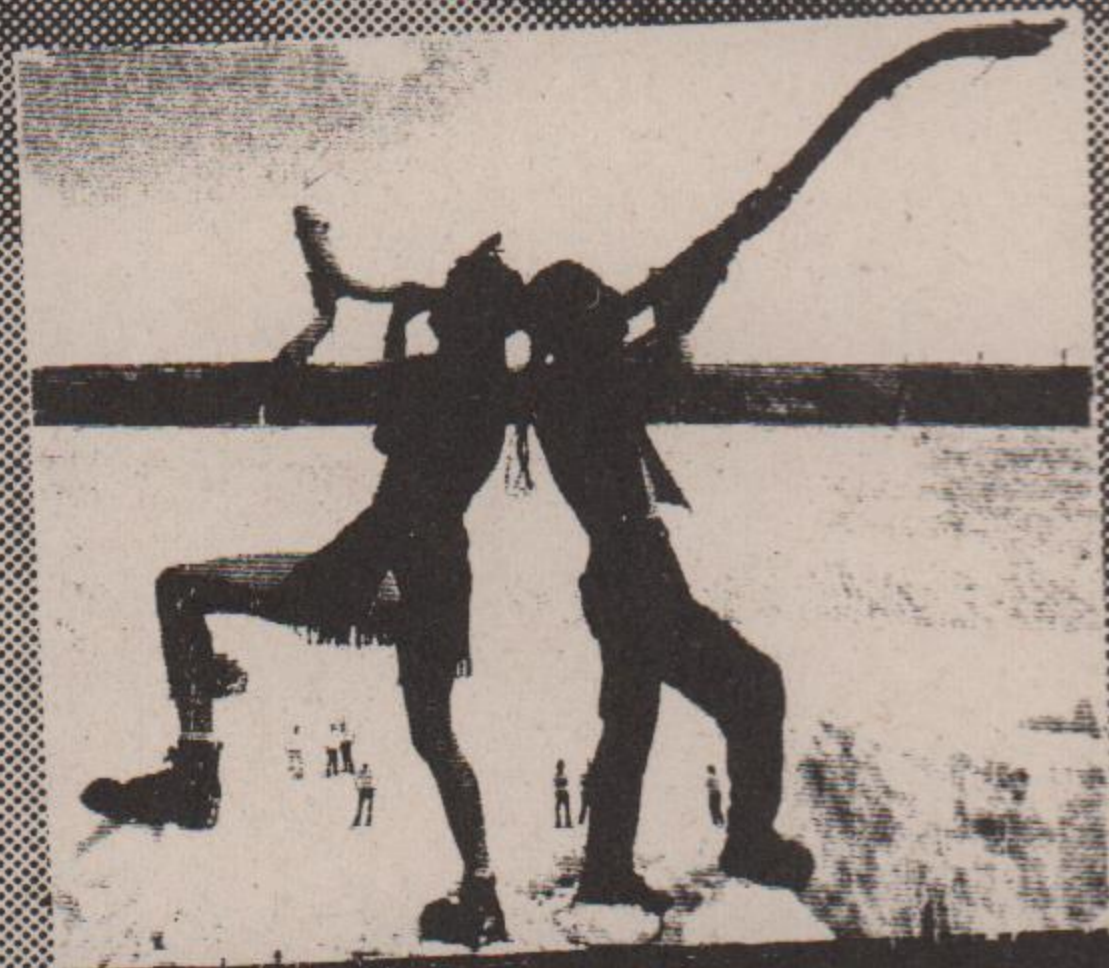


Filled with the old style of benches - hazel poles covered with arpaulin - the Donga village, complete with a pair of goats and a perimeter fence made from hawthorn branches, created a strangely anachronistic scene on the modern Hampshire countryside. 'I gradually came to realise why we were there,' Sam continues. 'I'd been at college and had come to the conclusion that it was a waste of time going into the mainstream. Living on Twyford Down was the University of Life and a lot more fun than living in the University of the Tories.' There is something about the Dongas Tribe. Anyone who has come across one of their kind, cannot fail to be affected by them.

Perhaps it's the extraordinary spirit of inner peace they project. Perhaps it's their unswerving commitment to protecting our rapidly disappearing countryside. It could even be the fact that they've turned their backs on everything that we're told is the 'right' way: mortgages, careers, cars, you know...and still they stand defiant, driven by something much stronger. These tribespeople could, if they had wanted, merge into the mainstream. They're all intelligent, many are skilled and often educated to degree level. 'There was something that started in us as individuals, long before we got together,' says Indra, another Donga. 'We all felt completely frustrated by the way our environment is being destroyed. But as individuals, the idea of trying to change things was overwhelming. Where do you start? When we came together we realised that not only did we all feel the same way but as a group we could do something about it.'

The events of Twyford Down are now much documented. But even though the M3 extension is well on its way to completion - following the brutal removal of the Tribe on 'Yellow Wednesday' in December '92, (see Pod 4) - the Dongas' activities have reached deep into the heart of the nation's conscience. The press began to take their campaign seriously when six members were jailed last July for breaching an injunction barring them from returning to protest on the site of the road-building.

The Dongas' protest brought the government's £20 billion road building scheme sharply into focus. The major question is: why is the Government spending billions on new roads when they are running public services and transport into the ground? Naturally, the protest also highlighted the government's distinct lack of commitment to a greener future. Their road scheme will destroy hundreds of designated areas of outstanding natural beauty, scheduled ancient monuments and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. 'It was quite hard work getting people to understand about roads at first,' says Sam. 'The majority just saw them as handy things to get from A to B. But once they were given the real facts, most saw the sense in what we were doing.'



For at least another hundred to ourselves and to every foul is fair. Avarice and our gods for a little longer and fair is not.



In the summer of last year, the Dongas' network had spread to environmental groups across the country. They became the catalyst for a new generation of eco-warriors and gave hope to the disillusioned and disenfranchised.

When the I10 M11 Link Road campaign in Wanstead, East London, turned to non violent direct action (NIDA) in the autumn of last year, new, modern day battles began the seeds of a national movement. The Battle of George Green and later, the Battle of Wanstonia, showed the British public how hard the State was prepared to stomp on people who got in its way.

Now, month by month, new tribes are forming all over the country. In March alone three new flashpoints appeared. The Lizard Tribe set up camp in Wymondham, near Norwich, to campaign against a new bypass which is believed to be earmarked for development into a huge Trans-European highway.

When Wymondham's MP, Transport Minister John MacGregor, agreed to start the construction by cutting the first symbolic piece of turf, local protesters moved in. First they made him late for the ceremony by chaining themselves to the underside of his coach.

Then they drowned out his speech with chants while six people locked themselves onto a digger.

The protesters' message was symbolised by one woman who dropped her drawers over MacGregor's freshly cut piece of turf and 'rained' on it!

The spirit of Twyford Down has been brought to life on Solsbury Hill, just outside Bath, where a camp has been set up next to work on a new bypass. The road 'improvement' here will destroy the ancient hill fort of Little Solsbury, a scheduled ancient monument and the inspiration for Peter Gabriel's song. The campaign has brought in much

media coverage and new recruits including Princess Diana's step-brother Rupert Legge, writer Bel Mooney and the Marchioness of Worcester.

In Ledenham, near Lincoln, the Aconite Tribe formed to try and halt work on a bypass which will cut through semi-ancient woodland. In early March, their protest camp came under attack from Group 4 security guards. With all the protesters pinned to the group, all but four trees were chainsawed. The camp held out for two further days until a local vigilante group cut down the remaining trees under cover of darkness. Despite this, regular actions are still being held to slow-up work.

The Government is always harping on about choice and democracy.

But there is a growing voice which is saying, their idea of democracy is certainly not ours. The only real choice we have is to conform or be criminalised. The message from tribes and individuals is the same. The conventional democratic channels for protest have become nothing more than an ever expanding stonewall. Talk to anyone who has tried to stand up to the State and they will tell you that lobbying and public enquiries are almost always loaded in favour of the men in suits.

'It's a miracle that we don't get violent. But we know there is a better way.'

red years we must pretend one that fair is foul and usury and precaution must be still for foul is useful



Probably the most alarming example of this is Greenpeace's bid to stop the Thorp nuclear reprocessing plant from opening. In February this year, the High Court turned down Greenpeace's request for a public enquiry which would include a vital environmental impact survey before operations went ahead. And if Thorp doesn't need an environmental impact survey, what does?! It was yet another example of the Government's wrong-headed approach to our land and our future.

'Losing Twyford Down was devastating,' says Sam Donga. 'It wasn't just one of the most beautiful areas in southern England, it was a place of great spiritual power. In a way, it was the greatest sacrifice. But perhaps it had to be or the campaign wouldn't have had such a strong impact.'

What the government hasn't banked on however, is that we have vision. Even if they refuse to remove their blinkers, we can see their policies are in essence unsustainable. Whether it takes 20 years or 200 years, the result of current political attitudes will be devastating. In the classic book *Small Is Beautiful*, author E.F. Schumacher points to what is perhaps the roots of the Tories' approach. He quotes Lord Keynes, one of the founders of modern day economic thinking as saying, 'For at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still.' Schumacher comments, '...It is hardly an exaggeration to say that by now the gods he recommended have been enthroned.'

But at last, it looks like the time has come again when the ordinary people are beginning to say enough's enough. What makes the Dongas and the new bands of eco-warriors so inspiring are their weapons - namely humour and peaceful direct action. They echo the past peace-movements; only this time they have technology on their side: computer nets, faxes and mobile phones are vital tools in the game of fast communication and national networking.

'Before Twyford, there was no real grass-roots environmental movement,' explains Howie, another Donga. 'There was Earth First! but that was quite removed from actually living on the land. The spirit of the protest on the Down spread much further than Hampshire. The feeling was that if they could bulldoze Twyford Down, they could get away with anything.'

Howie believes that it was music that marked the change. 'Demos used to be quite heavy things to get involved with,' he says. 'But Twyford wasn't about politics, it was about people and land. We brought drums, we sang, we danced. It was more of a celebration than a protest.' Howie echoes the feelings of many environmentalists. 'None of us has any faith in the political system. All parties are as bad as each other. But our experiences gave us a tribal spirit that completely threw the forces working against us.'

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If you want  
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Do it you

A tribal gathering at St. Catherine's Hill, Twyford Down, Hampshire.  
Photograph by Nigel Dickinson.





# no point around complaining as change, got to get off your arse and do it yourself.

Indra continues. 'It's making light of something that's so devastating to us all. There's no point in being depressed. We're young, we've got energy. We have to stand up for ourselves. Violence only breeds violence,' Indra adds. 'With all the things that have happened to us, it's a miracle that we don't get violent. But we know there is a better way.'

Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of non-violent direct action is its spirit. All that anger stored up inside can be channelling into a positive, constructive approach to some of the major issues of our time. These new tribes personify the ethos behind DIY culture, in other words, there's no point sitting around complaining about things. If you want change, you've got to get off your arse and Do It Yourself.

But it's not only the eco-warriors who are waking up. Communities all over the country are quietly gathering together and taking back control. Even the Sunday Times has picked up on this shift in society. In a far-reaching article by Martin Jacques, former editor of Marxism Today, the paper focusses on how modern politicians have set a new precedent for mediocrity. 'They stand before us like the emperor with no clothes,' he writes, 'Stripped of the aura which once protected them.' Jacques goes on to conclude: 'Fewer and fewer people believe in the party as a vehicle for change and as an object of their activities and affections...The formal boundaries of politics are dissolving. The political world of parties and state has been invaded by a vast range of institutions from civil society; from charities to women's groups, from cultural bodies to environmental organisations, many of which can boast far higher levels of membership and participation and which are almost invariably far more modern in their forms of organisation and activity.'

This change may be clouded by day to day politics but have no doubt, these are exciting times. Whether you believe in end-of-millennium predictions or just plain gut-feeling, there is something in the air. Thanks to the likes of the Dongas and the growing number of tribes, we have been shown a new way: a kind of quiet revolution. It is our duty to act on our beliefs too. The message from the eco-warriors is clear: You ain't seen nothing yet.

For more information about campaigns in your area contact: Road Alert! - the national information centre formed by members of the Dongas Tribe. Road Alert! also publishes a very excellent news sheet on current campaigns around the country. P.O. Box 371, Southampton, Hants, SO97BS.

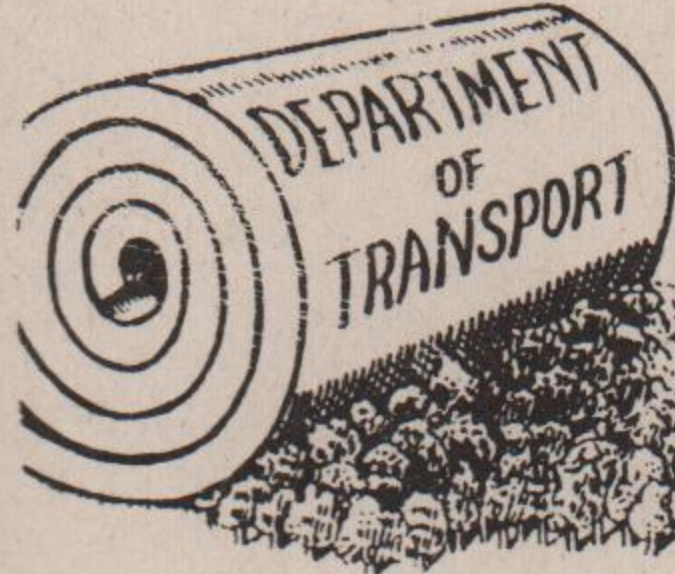


At the end of last summer, the front line of the anti-roads movement shifted to Wanstead and Leytonstone in east London. A new tribe of eco-warriors came together to try and stop the construction of a £20 million link road which will cut straight through the local community



The planned route will connect the M11 motorway to the Blackwall tunnel and South London. The courageous and often humorous non-violent direct action protests have won the campaigners front page coverage. Miss Pod joined them on the front line to get the inside story.

This is your conscience speaking,' said the voice on the answerphone. 'Red Alert at George Green. Get out of bed!' The alarm clock had been set for 3am but I'd slept right through it. It was 8.30 and already news of the Battle of George Green was being broadcast on national radio.



Coming  
YOUR  
way?

# the warrior

As I sat in the heavy traffic on the approach to Wanstead, I noticed that all the slogans that had mysteriously appeared along the walls of the road construction site had been painted over. It was a shame, I thought the messages were well placed for bored motorists to mull over as they sat in jams like this one. The longest one had spanned practically the whole length of the street. '£200 MILLION FOR THIS ROAD - OR TEN HOSPITALS. WHAT DO YOU THINK? THIS ROAD IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH' Next to a skull and cross bones someone had painted in equally large letters; 'BEWARE, POISON GAS FACTORY UNDER CONSTRUCTION. ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE.' On the pavement beside the site, you could still see where someone had painted,



D-locked female protester grimaces as she is cut loose.

'MUM, DAD. WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE ECO-WAR?' Remembering the slogans made my mind wander back to the events of the past few months. My first contact with the 110 M11 Link Road Campaign was when I was invited up to one of their DIY Days of Action in early Autumn last year. It was a Sunday but the back streets of Leytonstone were busy with activity to save some of the 300-odd houses in the new road's path.



Protester with 'Earth First!' logo on his helmet.



Wounded Donga.

The alliance of local campaigners and a new tribe of eco-warriors had been playing a game of 'squat and bulldoze' with the Department of Transport. Rows of 'compulsory purchase' houses had been squatted in an attempt to stop the demolition men moving in. A group of 30 or 40 people had gathered outside half a dozen houses in Dyers Hall Road and were busy replacing floorboards, staircases and joists that had been ripped out by the road builders in a bid to make the houses uninhabitable. In a corner house half a dozen people were busy brewing tea below a giant hole in the ceiling; an umbrella hanging from a joist to stop the rain coming in. A few houses down, someone was up a ladder painting a tree over the peeling paint work.

It was pretty clear from the start, that this campaign had become another meeting of the tribes. Members of the Dongas Tribe had joined forces with members of Newcastle's Flowerpot Tribe, Earth First!, and a new alliance of eco-activists who had moved in to squats and committed themselves to the campaign full time. But probably most surprising of all was the support coming from the local people who had been fighting the road for almost 20 years.

One of the most extraordinary houses was a few roads down. The end of terrace house belonged to Mick, a long-time Leytonstone resident in his late fifties. With the help of fellow campaigners he had literally turned his home into a fortress. All the windows had been sealed with corrugated iron and reinforced with a fan of metal girders and railway sleepers. Inside the front door was a heavy wooden shutter propped up by a scaffold pole. 'As soon as there's any sign of the bulldozers, you just pull away the pole and the shutter comes down over the front door,' Mick explained with a glint in his eye.

# rs of Wanstead

At the top of the stairs, the opening to the first floor had been boarded over, leaving a small opening wide enough for one person to squeeze through. 'That should slow down any unwanted visitors,' said Mick. On the landing, a large tin drum of water filled with water stood waiting to drench invaders.

In the front bedroom small holes had been drilled into the dividing wall. 'You slide a pipe through the hole,' Mick explained. 'Then one person at either end puts their arms through the pipe and padlocks their wrists in the middle. They'll have to knock down the wall around you to get

But Mick's real glory was on the roof where a hangman's noose hung down ominously from the chimney stack. 'I'll hang myself if I have to!' he threatened.

It was hard to work out how many people were hammering away in the different squats, the sound seemed to be coming from everywhere. A truck sporadically appeared on the front line of materials from one street to another. There was a tension in the air that always seems to be present on the front line of roads-protest, a feeling of living for today because you never know what you're going to have thrown at you tomorrow.



Protester with 'NO MONSTROUS MOTORWAY' on his hat.





ut despite this, the campaigners seem to have the dedication of people who know, despite the odds, that they are doing something they believe in. 'You get used to it,' says Susie who came to Leytonstone to join a day of action and decided to stay. 'It's not just a protest, it's a symbol of our times. People have had enough of unwanted roads being forced on their communities. What we've got here is the energy and the time to physically do something here and now.'

Later that evening, many of the campaigners met up at a nearby squat. A dozen or so people with drums and a didgeridoo gathered around a fire in the back garden. It seemed a pretty peaceful scene but it belied the enormous pressures the campaigners were under. Try organising a full-scale operation while living hand to mouth with a dozen other people, in a squat that could be demolished tomorrow, with no proper heating or electricity and hostility from people who haven't got further than the 'dirty squatters' phase, and you'll see what I mean.

But it wasn't just their living conditions. Around the fire, they told of the time invisible attackers had smashed up cars parked in the streets where campaigners were living; the numerous occasions they had been arrested for extraordinary offences like 'damaging a piece of string'; and the night when a group claiming to be members of the fascist-group Combat 18 burst into a campaigner's squat.

But there were some positive stories too. Like the one about the security guard who jacked in his job patrolling the main road-construction site to join the campaign and another about Jean, the local lollipop lady, who been sacked for joining in a protest in her uniform and who went on to become one of the campaign's most outspoken supporters. 'Whether they're good or bad, all these things bring us closer together,' said one campaigner watching the sparks from the fire swirl up into the night sky.

A few weeks later, attention turned to George Green, a mile or so up the road in Wanstead at the other end of the road-scheme. The M11 link would cut straight across the green and the group had built a tree house in a 200-year-old sweet chestnut tree. Local school kids had joined in to decorate the tree's branches with tinsel and ribbon.

When workmen started to build high wooden hoarding around the Green, the campaigners moved in and managed to pull it all down again. Again kids helped replace the small area of grass where bulldozers had already started work and turned it into a 'peace garden' with plants donated from a local nursery.

These small delays may seem insignificant on their own, but the campaigners have a clear view of what they are trying to do. 'Every delay causes a drain on the finances of the DoT's £23 billion national road building scheme, gets the whole issue raised in the media and hopefully puts off other contractors from taking on similar work,' says Phil, a member of the Dongas Tribe.

The sweet chestnut tree soon became one of the most important symbols of the anti-roads protest. In the High Court, the campaigners had won a significant case by claiming that the tree was a legal dwelling because a letter had been delivered by the Post Office to a specially made letter box in its branches. It was the first tree house in legal history to be officially recognised by the British Courts. The campaigners managed to delay the destruction of George Green while the Department of Transport had to go through the process of getting a formal eviction order.

In the end though, the campaigners knew that the bulldozers would move in. A tip-off came into the campaign office that police were going to move in before dawn on Tuesday 7th December last year. By early evening on the 6th, people were already gathering around a fire at the base of the tree. Banners had been put up around it. 'THE NHS IS DYING. SCHOOLS ARE CLOSING. PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS IN RUIN. £200 MILLION WASTED ON THE M11.' Others put it more simply, 'DRIVING TO WORK? YOU MUST BE CHOKING' stood by a placard saying, 'STOP POLLUTING, SHARE COMMUTING.'

## Dear Tree

*I really do believe now, that things are going to change. You young people have had an impact on the public consciousness. I feel strongly for you and your tree.*

*You are doing the things that my generation should have done, when we were young. And you are a splendid inspiration for the next generation. I do not know whether or not, by your efforts, Spring will ever come again to your tree.*

*If it does, then that is a triumph over darkness. But even if you fail, other things will be defended by people following your example and some day, somewhere, trees will stay alive that would have died, had you not done what you are doing now.*

A letter to the sweet chestnut tree taken from 'Dear Tree' a booklet of 400 letters of goodwill sent to the sweet chestnut tree on George Green.

the Battle  
THEY ARE POWERFUL BUT WE ARE JUSTIFIED



A red alert had been put out nationwide and as the evening progressed, the numbers began to swell. It felt more like a party than preparation for battle. People got out their drums, penny-whistle, they danced, chanted and whooped as the night drew in.

I stayed for a few hours watching and listening. Several local residents arrived with bags of food and supplies. Other simply came over to give their support and warm themselves by the fire. But the most incredible thing I saw that evening was when a woman in a wheelchair appeared at the other end of the Green. She made it half way across the grass by pushing the chair with her crippled feet. When we spotted her, someone went over to see if she was all right but she refused any offers of help. As she came closer to the fire, she pulled out a handful of luncheon vouchers and offered them as a donation to the campaign.

As you know, I missed the beginnings of the Battle of George Green. But in a newsletter titled News From The Wanstead Front Line, the campaigners recall the scene.

"At 3am, around 200 police officers arrived to remove some of the 150 protesters who were guarding the 250-year-old sweet chestnut tree. Most of the protesters were sitting peacefully with their arms linked around the tree. A few had linked themselves into a ring around the tree trunk by putting their arms through steel tubing. Others were in the tree itself, guarding the tree house which had been occupied throughout the preceding month, despite freezing weather conditions and snow.

'Protesters were outraged by the level of brutality inflicted by the police as they cleared people out of the way. Pensioners were dragged away without warning - one had his face punched, smashing his glasses. After about an hour of scuffles, police had the tree surrounded and started to bring in reinforcements to cordon it off. There were now about 200 protesters and 300 police.'

Adrian Short, a freelance photo-journalist, now takes up the story. 'It became obvious that the police had planned to take the site as quickly as possible before daylight and were prepared to use brute force and strength of numbers to achieve their aim. Many protesters were left bruised and bleeding as the police pushed and then punched their way toward the trunk. One woman was badly injured as two policemen dragged

her face-down by her ankles through the remains of the fire. A police Chief Inspector, when asked for first aid assistance, responded, "She's your mate - you call an ambulance."

'The defenders of the tree held out for two hours before the police were able to gain control of the tree and it took a further two before they were able to cut loose those who had locked themselves on with steel arm-tubes. At nine o'clock, the tree-squatters were still in the tree house and

passers-by on their way to work or school were able to witness the grim spectacle of the police taking away their common land by force. The crowd was chanting "Shame," as one tree-squatter was pulled out of the house and down the ladder.'.....

By the time I arrive, the battle had reached stalemate. I'd counted the number of riot vans parked up along the road on the approach to the Green.

One.....two.....eleven....fifteen...twenty. 'Christ,' I thought. 'This is big time offensive.' On the Green itself, a ring of police, three deep surrounded the base of the tree. Ten people lay, sat or stood high above in the branches. 'We could be here all week if it goes on like this,' I naively thought to myself.

THEY KNOW THE COST  
OF ALL THINGS  
YET THE VALUE OF  
NONE.



# of George Green



By that time, the press was there in force. It was a strange scene to say the least. People stood around in a large outer ring, drumming, singing, chanting. A chorus started up of a chant that has virtually become synonymous with the tribes. 'We are the old people, we are the new people, we are the same people, stronger than before.' Meanwhile some were having a rant at the police. Shouts of support went up to the tree-sitters who smiled and waved back. Another chant went up, 'You can't kill the spirit, you can't kill the spirit, you can't kill the spirit of the Dragon.' People hugged each other. There was an overwhelming feeling of warmth among the crowd, a solidarity. We felt strong and to be honest a lot less silly than the rings of police who stood holding onto the backs of the each others trousers as if they were getting ready to do some strange conga.

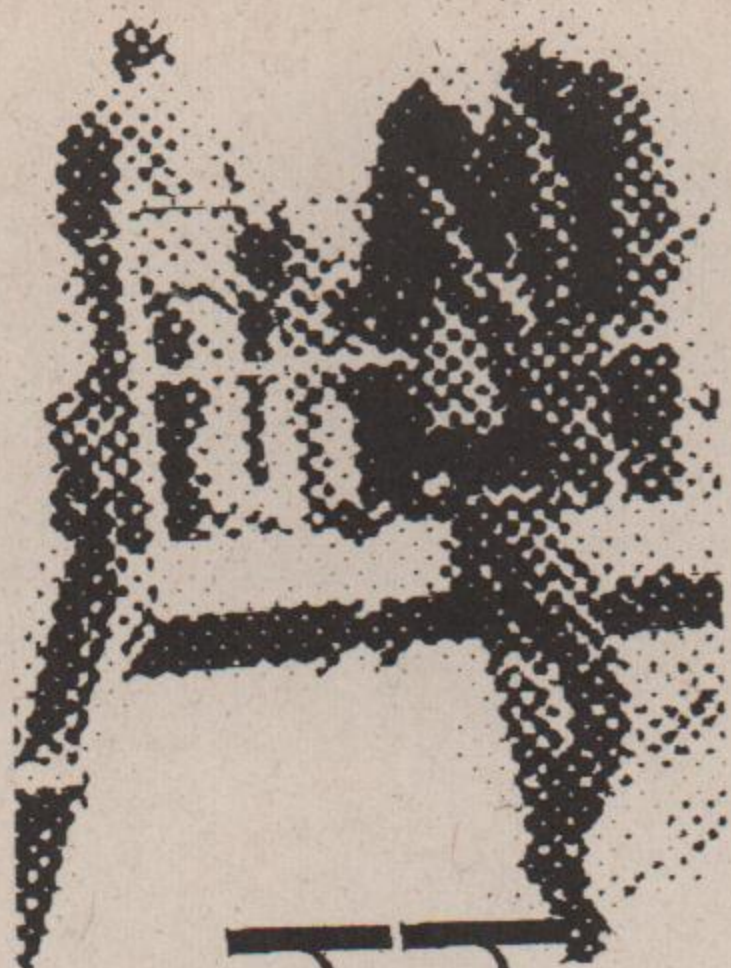
Just after 10am, a shiver ran through the crowd. 'The cherry picker!' someone shouted, pointing towards the end of the Green. Automatically, the atmosphere changed. People began to surge towards the road. 'Quick, this way,' we were urged. Around the corner, a large hydraulic platform edged towards us, surrounded by yellow-jacketed security men.

Almost instinctively, people began to lie down in its path. Each time they were picked up and dragged to one side by the police, they ran round to the front of the line and lay down again like an eco-version of tag. 'Watch out,' someone shouted. 'They're using pressure points.' Several protesters unsuccessfully ran at the ring of security guards around the picker in an attempt to crawl underneath. Police tempers flared. One officer I saw attempted to punch out at a protester before being restrained by his colleagues. Several women sat watching the scene with tears streaming down their faces.

Despite the lines of bodies on the road, the police presence was overwhelming and again, the picker edged forward towards the green. But then an unforeseen blessing came our way. The picker had scarcely mounted the Green when it became stuck in the mud. 'It's earth magic,' someone shouted. 'Now we know why it rained so hard last night.' Suddenly, as the picker's driver tried to move forward, the machine jumped backwards, knocked over a female protester. She lay on the ground motionless. Cries went up, 'Call an ambulance.'

An hour later, the picker had edged forward far enough to lift two sheriffs up to the nearest tree squatter in the tree's branches. From below it looked like the sitter surrendered without resistance. Then we saw why. As soon as he was pulled into the platform, he pulled free and began to crawl up along the hydraulic arm. When he reached the joint of the arm, he took out a pair of handcuffs and locked himself on. More whoops came from the crowd.

We were sure that the operation would have to stop while they remove him. But the picker moved forward again, the remaining squatters leaping from branch to branch in a bid to escape its advances. Finally a second squatter was lifted off but he struggled so much the sheriffs couldn't haul him onto the platform. They held him by his arms as he dangled in mid-air, nothing between him and the ground 50 ft below. 'You can't do that,' someone screamed up at them. More cries of 'shame' rose from the crowd. 'Nothing's changed since Robin Hood, has it?' a pensioner remarked to her friend.



he dangled in mid-air, nothing between him and the ground 50 ft below.



Perhaps most distressing of all the things I saw that day came around noon. One of the sheriffs climbed down onto the central branches and attempted to saw through a branch with a tree-squatter still sitting on it. When the squatter turned round to try and fend him off, the sheriff lashed out with the saw.

Someone scream. Suddenly the branch broke and the squatter fell with it. His fall was broken by the roof of the tree house, which in turn gave way. He began to slide down again until mercifully one of the other squatters managed to catch his arm.

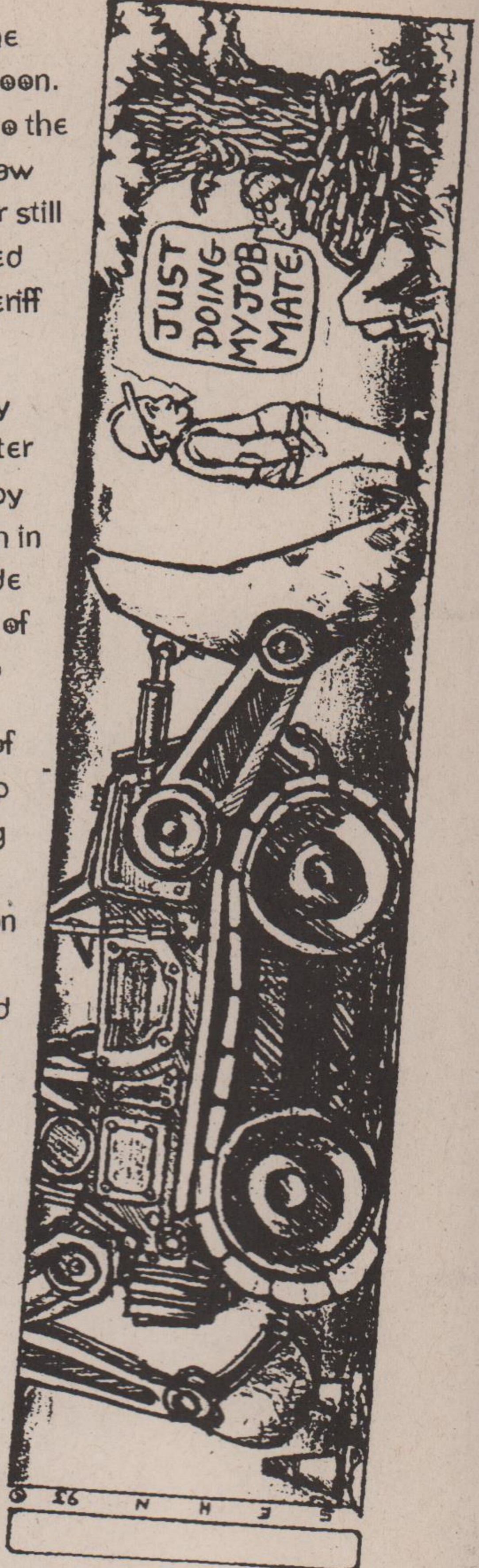
One old gent went up to the ring of police around the tree and pointed up to the sitters. 'You're facing the wrong way officer,' he said politely. 'Look behind you. The real crime is going on behind your back and you're doing nothing about it.' Meanwhile a second shout came from the opposite end of the green. 'The digger's coming! The digger!' Again people began to lie down in its path. As more scuffles broke out, one of the security men in the ring around it fell underneath. Both his legs were broken.

By early afternoon, all the squatters had been removed from the tree and the digger had advanced. Everything suddenly went very still. There was an overwhelming feeling of sorrow as its great arm raised up and crashed down on the branches. Several women screamed. There was a feeling of total helplessness. The symbolism was overwhelming. Here was the brute force of the state crashing down on the tree and in effect, us. Metal gauged into wood. Great chunks were torn out. In what seemed like a matter of minutes, the sweet chestnut lay in a ragged heap on the ground, a great wooden corpse surrounded by a sea of black helmets.

The attack then turned on a group of plane trees at the far end of the Green where more tree-squatters had been waiting all day. Theba, a 22-year-old, had been clinging onto a branch 80ft up in a plane tree. As she was hauled off by two sheriffs in a cherry-picker, she cried out. 'My arm was wrenched when they grabbed me and the small bones in my elbow were broken,' She later explained. Despite her injury, Theba was defiant. 'We may have lost the tree but it's still a triumph for us because we showed just what kind of people we're having to deal with. The police began to look pretty sheepish. It was becoming clear that the situation was out of control.

The message that has come across clearly from these protests is that you don't necessarily have to throw yourself in front of a bulldozer. Phil Donga explains, 'It's important for people to understand that they should only do what they feel comfortable doing. Just by being there and giving us their support, they are playing an important role.'

FOR A COPY OF DEAR TREE, SEND £2 AND A SAE (CHEQUES PAYABLE TO WAM11) TO PO Box 956, LEYTONSTONE DELIVERY OFFICE, 6 JOSEPH RAY ROAD, LONDON E11 1AA. FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CALL THE NO M11 CAMPAIGN ON (081) 530-5709.





# Independent free area of Wanstonia

Declaration of Independence from the people of Wanstonia  
In response to the threat of their homeland posed by the construction  
of the M11 Link Road.

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the cause which impel them to the separation. We, the inhabitants of Nos two to twelve Cambridge Park Road and also Nos one hundred and six Eastern Avenue, in Wanstead, do solemnly declare ourselves to forthwith absolved of all allegiance to the British Crown and our territory to be an Independent Free Area, henceforth to be known as Wanstonia. We take this step with great reluctance and it is our intention to maintain cordial relations with Great Britain, and allow free access to all friendly visitors. Nevertheless it is our view that Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom is inflicting yet another unnecessary, unpopular and deeply destructive road scheme on our locality, is showing inadequate regard for environmental concerns or for the housing needs of its populus.

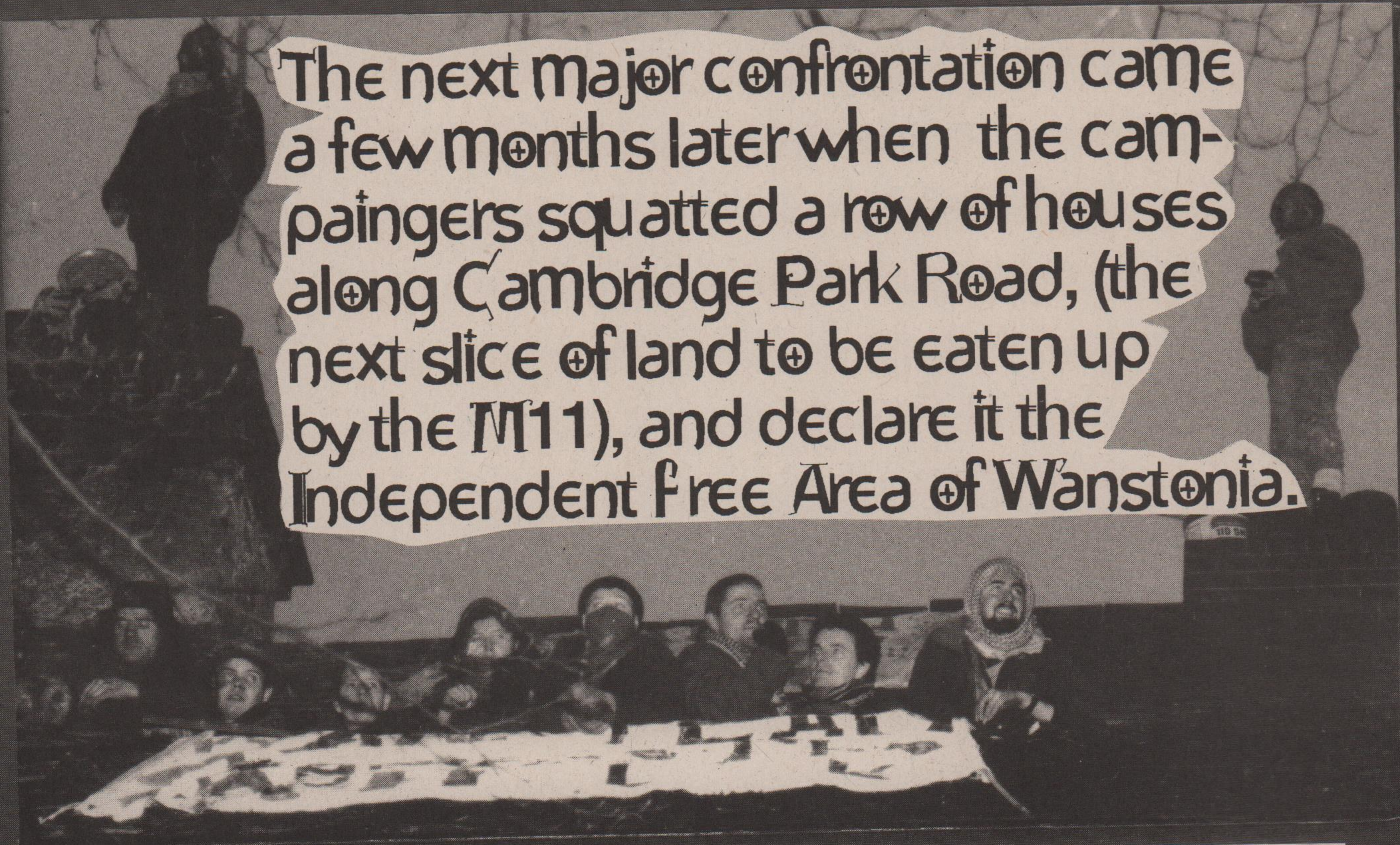
**Our causes are these:** That our houses, gardens, tree byways, open spaces and indeed all that we hold dear in our domain are to be utterly destroyed to make way for the M11 Link Road; That far from linking localities together, this motorway will cause brutal severance to the communities of Leyton, Leytonstone and Wanstead; That this road is constructed primarily for the benefit of those commercial interests known collectively as the 'roads lobby'; That this road has been imposed on us, not through reasonable and fair process of consultation but through a weighted system of 'public enquiry' in which the British Government, with unlimited access to taxpayer's money, with unlimited powers to select judge and jury and with unlimited authority to determine the criteria and terms of reference of the inquiry, can engineer a decision through process that bears no resemblance to what we and most and of the rest of the world consider to be democracy. And finally that our right to protest peacefully against the abuse of our rights and the right of the community have been met with undue and sometimes vicious force and pernicious use of underhand tactics.

**We therefore and more generally maintain:** That the relenting construction of motorways, red routes, cut and cover tunnels and all other proposed conduits for high-speed traffic is incompatible with the pursuit of sustainable environmental policies; this same infrastructure will generate yet more of the very traffic that it is ostensibly designed to alleviate; and that this traffic will further impair the health and restrict the freedom of those who are permitted to remain living in its vicinity.

**We hold these truths to be self-evident:** That the protection of the environment takes precedent over infrastructural development; That the provision of homes takes precedent over the provision of roads to serve those homes; That facilities provided for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users take precedent over those provided for the use of private motor vehicles; And that the interests of local communities take precedence over the opinions of remote political decision makers.

**Finally:** We therefore call on all people who share these ideals and aspirations to come to the defence of this new domain, so that it may in time become the seed of the Confederation of Independent Free Areas, embodying our common concerns to protect and preserve our local, national and global environments. For support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the International Community, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our honour.





The next major confrontation came a few months later when the campaigners squatted a row of houses along Cambridge Park Road, (the next slice of land to be eaten up by the M11), and declare it the Independent Free Area of Wanstonia.

*The calm before the storm:* Protesters (top) keep watch on the roof of number 10 as dawn arrives. Dozens of others occupy every available space inside and out (bottom) in a bid to stop the houses being torn down.





# THE BATTLE OF WANSTONIA

The next major confrontation came a few months later when the campaigners squatted a row of houses along Cambridge Park Road, (the next slice of land to be eaten up by the M11), and declare it the Independent Free Area of Wanstonia. A special written declaration issued to the press captured the spirit of the eco-warrior (see illustration). Wanstonia lived for several months before the bulldozers again move in.

It was still dark when I arrived at around 5am on the morning of February 16th. The three remaining villas were choc-a-bloc with people. In one front garden a tree house (with a specially constructed gangplank leading from a bedroom window) was packed with people. More sat on the roofs, window sills, porch roofs, anything with a vaguely stable surface.

The banner brigade had been busy again. Huge multi-coloured signs were strung across the front of the houses: 'Mr MacGregor How Would You Feel If This Was Your Home?', 'Chestnut Rising, Railcards Not Roads,' 'Wanstonia Welcomes Careful Drivers.' 'Let London Breathe.' A strange UV spider hung out of an upstairs window above an old 2CV car half buried in a ditch between two houses. The Union Jill, the eco-warriors flag, flapped angrily from the top of a chimney.

Dawn arrived all too quickly. Inside, you could see nervous faces pressed against windows and the sound of penny whistles and drumming competing with the noise of the first commuter traffic. On the stroke of 7am, someone shouted, 'The road blocks have started.' Indeed, the whole road had suddenly gone strangely quiet. Two police road blocks at either end had stopped all cars coming through. The calm was pierced by shrill whistles coming from everywhere. The sound of drumming reverberated off the surrounding walls.

Here's how my diary went:

7.10 - From nowhere, 15 riot vans have rolled up the road. Whoops, shouting, tension. A chant begins, 'No more roads. No more roads'. The sheriff cruises up and down the strip in a van, shouting through a loud hailer, 'Leave the premises now.' From the end house an air raid siren starts up. Giggles all round. I bump into Michelle, one of the Flower Pot Tribe ( a protest group from Newcastle who tried in vain to stop a bypass cutting through Jesmond Dene, a local park and nature trail. 'There are loads of people in there. At least 20 have concreted their arms into oil drums, fridges and stuff,' she tells me. They're going to have a job removing this lot.'

The Press pack and me have been herded behind a cordon. 'This is what it takes to build a road in 1994,' someone shouted down from the tree house.

7.24 - Riot police begin to swarm up to the middle house. Half a dozen attempt to break down the door of No 8 but it resists. Derisory laughter from the tree. Police produce a sledgehammer, door still refused to budge.

At number 10, the door begins to shift after 10 minutes hammering. 'That'll confuse them,' says Michelle. There's no staircase.' Bleating permeates from the tree house. Suddenly, the sound of smashing glass is everywhere. The gangplank to the tree house is removed, to stop police reaching the tree-sitters. More whoops, an ARRIVA! and bells ringing. Security men began to arrive with ladders.

8.00 - More smashing glass. Riot police begin to bring out a few protesters. 'You wont laugh when your kids are dying from pollution,' someone shouts down from the roof. A mournful penny whistle starts up. More questions: 'How many of you are going to get asthma?' 'Do you want to get Mad Car disease?'

10.30 A tree creaks and fall to the ground at number 2. There are still at least half a dozen people sitting on the roof and a bulldozer has already broken through the side wall. Appeals to protect the roof-sitters' safety are ignored.

10.35 Cherry picker lifts demolition men up to roof of number 8. Tiles flying everywhere. Mick attempts to fend off sledgehammer with his foot. Sledgehammer hits his foot instead of tiles. Michelle tells me that at the top of number 2, one room is completely sealed

with two people inside. Their arms are concreted into a fridge. I read the press release and learn that 700 police deployed for this operation.

12.05 - A large crowd of ejected protesters and local supporters has gathered behind the police cordons. Someone throws an egg at police. He is strongly reprimanded by two protesters.

12.30 - nos 8 and 10 have been cleared. Someone is walked out by two police officers with a large chunk of chimney attached to his arm.

1.25 Claws of digger appears between two houses.

1.30 Cherry picker works its way along no 8's roof. Slates crash down. 'No M11' chants start up again. Several roof-sitters slip and nearly fall off. One bloke's fall only stopped by a chimney. People being chucked out and walked through police cordon to cheering crowds. 'It's like the end of a marathon,' someone says.

3pm - No 10b collapses in a pile of rubble and dust.

6.20 - Everything has disappeared. A thin mist of dust surrounds the only remaining structure - the people in the tree house. Demolition men finally manage to remove them and the tree is cut down.

These are only two incidents in a series of events that have occurred at the No M11 Link Campaign. In March, Operation Roadblock began in Wanstead. The aim was to get people to donate a day of their lives to help hold up work for a month. On the first day swarms of people, many dressed in white lab overalls, pushed down barbed wire and climbed over hoarding surrounding the site where Wanstonia once stood. A dozen climbed up onto huge cranes and obstructed work for the day.

The campaign's most direct gesture came when Transport Minister John MacGregor woke up one spring morning to find five protesters on his roof. They unfurled a huge banner of a motorway and the words, 'M11 Link Return To Sender.'

Two new States of Leytonstonia and Euphoria sprung up following the destruction of Wanstonia. Claremont Road became the central focus in April when a new fortress was made along an almost entire road of squats. All the upstairs walls along the line of terraced houses were knocked into one long corridor. An 'Art House' exhibition centre was also set up in one of the centre houses. Nearby, the Dongas had set up camp complete with benders and mini Stonehenge in a small area of threatened woodland.

In June the bender camp was trashed too. Claremont Road, with its heavy fortification will probably have been demolished by the time you read this.

It's almost certain that the Campaign will not halt the M11 link road. But the warriors of Wanstead and Leytonstone have managed to cause serious financial losses. In the first seven months of construction, the contractors had only managed to complete two months work.

Like many of the anti-roads campaigns growing up around Britain, the M11 issue is typical. There are still local residents who want the road to go ahead. This is understandable as the congestion is a nightmare. 'We don't blame people for thinking this,' says Phil. 'But we want people to have the whole picture. They've been fed information from the DoT which only gives the rosy picture. What we're saying is that in the long term, the local people will be worse off. More roads means more traffic, more pollution, more chaos. We have to make the Government see that they're on a road to nowhere.'

*I REALISED THEN - IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE THEN YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT YOURSELF - DIRECT ACTION IS THE ANSWER -*



*HIT THE BASTARDS WHERE IT HURTS --- IN THE WALLET ---*



## THE ROAD TO CHANGE BEGINS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL

Not everyone feels that front-line protest is for them. But that's not to say that we can't all make an important contribution in some way. It's a question of finding what you feel comfortable with. The most difficult part is taking the first step. But it's also the most empowering. The first time I stood up and planted a 'I Don't Want A Dose From Thorp' sticker on the tube, it was exhilarating. I'd broken through the barrier of guilt and self-consciousness. It was a tiny act but a positive one and the people sitting around me smiled. The more you do, the better the buzz. And doing is what it's all about. There is no more time left to sit around and complain.

## WE ARE THE LAST GENERATION

With the growing fears over the destruction of our natural environment, it's very likely that we are the last generation that can change things before it's too late. Month by month we're losing beautiful pieces of countryside that can never be replaced.

The new Criminal Justice Act will, in effect, outlaw peaceful direct action. Many people will be sent to prison for trying to save our countryside and communities. The anti-roads campaigners have already shown their commitment to opposing the government's road building scheme. So far, ten people have already been jailed. Busker Paul, a member of the Dongas Tribe believes there is only one way to go forward, 'We'll just have to get better at it!' he says.

It's become clear that Non Violent Direct Action isn't confined to the roads protests. The idea is spreading to an extraordinary range of environmental campaigns. These range from:

**\*Suit Protests** - Hippies dressing up in suits and disrupting the Annual General Meetings of banks and corporations with a barrage of embarrassing ethical questions.

**\*Ethical Shoplifting** - Filling your supermarket trolley and then holding up the queue by refusing to pay on the ground that supermarkets destroy local community shops and trade.

**\*Bicycle blockades** - Blockades held in Oxford, Birmingham and London. Main artery roads held up by 'go-slow' cyclists calling for 'Bikes before roads'. Disabled groups are also using NVDA to campaign for equal rights.

**\*Media magnets** - i.e. Operation Emily where the Freedom Network and friends dressed up as Suffragettes and chained themselves to the railings of the Houses of Parliament to protest against the Criminal Justice Bill and the erosion of democratic rights.

**\*Wood Walking** - Removing mahogany and other hard woods from furniture stores and withholding them on the grounds that the hardwood trade kills rainforest. At least in this country, they don't shoot people who are brave enough to question the wisdom of the state.....yet.

## NVDA SUCCESSES.....

**JULY 1993** - The movement's first major victory. The Department of Transport shelves plans to build a trunk road through the middle of Oxleas Woods, London's oldest area of woodland after 3,000 local people pledged to re-enact the battle of Twyford Down and lie down in front of bulldozers.

**JANUARY 1994** The Government is urged to rethink its strategy for widening the M25 after a stockbroker-belt rebellion. Local communities and environmental groups promise high-level resistance if work to create a 14 lane super-highway goes ahead.

On Panorama, Chertsey and Walton MP Sir Geoffrey Pattie said of the scheme for a super-highway, 'It made us all sit back and say - where is this policy leading us? Why are they actually doing this? It's so startling, it forces you to stand back and say does this make sense? And then you start talking to people, who say, well, actually, I don't think it makes sense either.' (Shame Sir Geoffrey doesn't talk to people more often.)

## FEBRUARY 1994

Protesters manage to stop a Sainsbury's supermarket being built on a piece of untouched countryside outside Yeovil, Paddy Ashdown's constituency. The Protesters squat an empty Tesco's supermarket in town and suggest that Sainsbury's do the decent thing and open their new branch there. Sainsbury's begin to sweat when the campaigners launch an ethical shoplifting exercise. Sainsbury's finally backs down. No thanks to Paddy Ashdown.

## MARCH 1994

Victory and disappointment. The government does a major U-turn and announces it is to drop 49 road schemes, a third of its total roads programme, saving £3 billion. A further 69 are deferred for at least 10 years.

But some of the most controversial schemes which affect homes, heritage, landscape and wildlife remain firmly in the roads programme. Road protesters vow to step up their campaign. 'This is rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic,' says Fiona Reynolds, director of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Transport Secretary John MacGregor says work on 80 of the remaining schemes would be given priority and speeded up. He adds that more attention would be paid to environmental concerns in the future!!

## JUNE 1994

The government announces a two-year delay in deciding whether to build the £300 million M62 relief road in Greater Manchester. During a consultation period, 18,000 letters were sent in suggesting alternative proposals. The 11 mile, six lane highway would mean the demolition of 370 homes. Roads Minister Robert Key denies the delay is prompted by local protests. David Sumberg, Conservative MP for the marginal seat of Bury South says, 'We have won a battle, if not the war.'

## MORE FEARS.....

We are not alone. The European Union wants to spend more than £800 billion on creating 12,000kms of motorway in the next 20 years. Pollution emissions are expected to increase by 30 to 80 per cent.

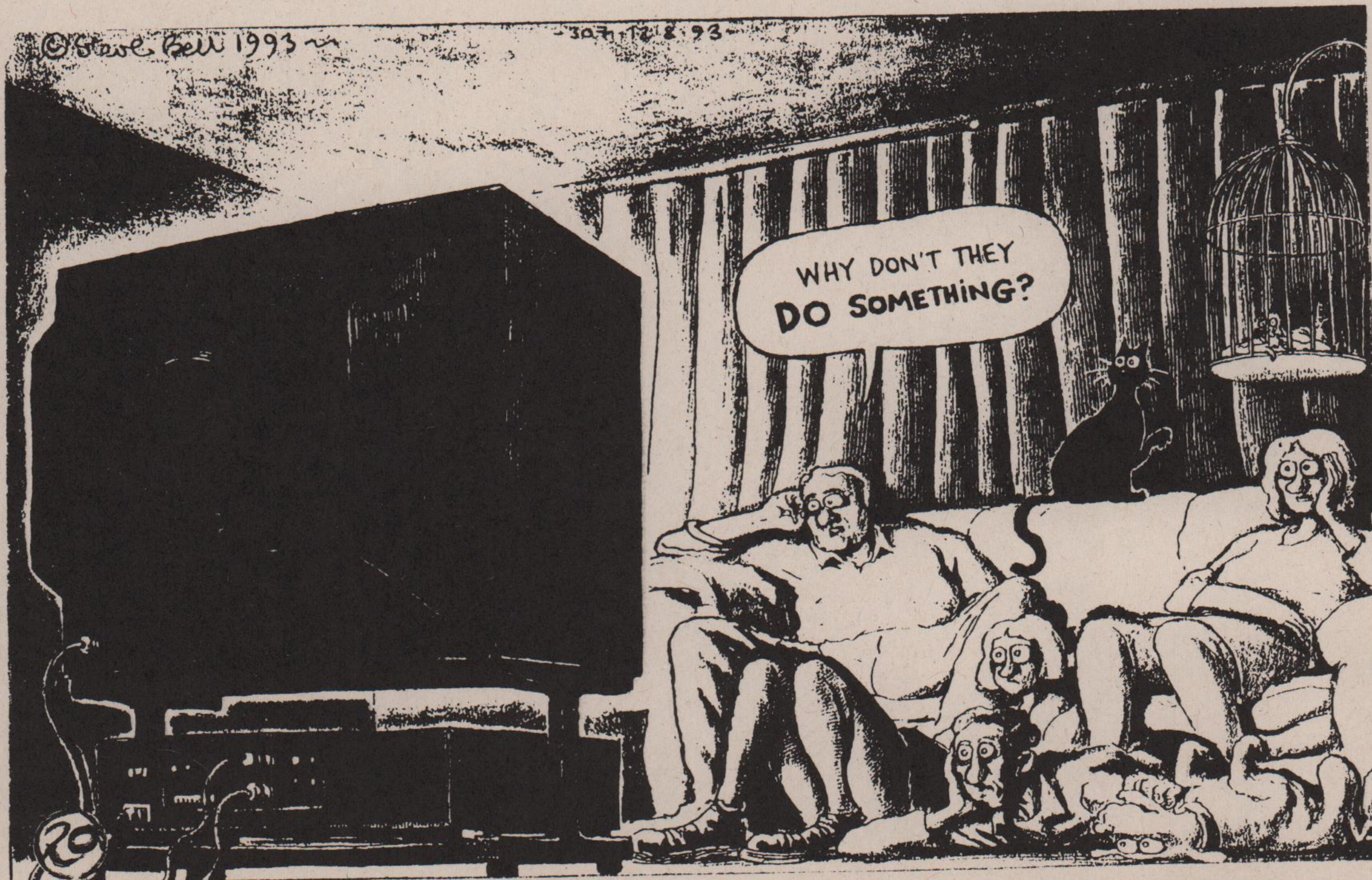
In the Valley of the Aspe in Southern France, armed riot police stand guard round the clock on a site for a motorway that will cut through the last remaining colony of European bears in the Pyrenees. A local teacher and protester said, 'For daring to protest, we have had to endure the most frightful attacks from the riot police, complete with truncheons and CS gas.'

Switzerland is the only country which has officially objected to the scheme. Through its system of direct democracy, (which allows its citizens to change or reverse Government policy through referendums) the road-building mania has been sabotaged. In February, voters unilaterally banned all foreign lorries from travelling through their territory.

Empower yourself. Join the eco-war before it's too late.

## IN THE OPEN HAND OF GOD I STAND: POST-WAR LANDSCAPES

A democratic countryside...  
In post-war propaganda  
for consumption at home,  
we saw ourselves as  
hikers beside a torrent  
on the moors above Whitby:  
An innocent couple pushing  
their bikes up the scarp -  
vale and meadow hung,  
as if painted on dusty sheets  
from the horizon below.  
We had this fellowship  
in place of Rights - no need  
for laws in Alfred's England -  
No swastika to bow to -  
no image of Lenin.  
Now the feudal lords re-assert  
the integrity of ownership  
with 'Keep Out' signs. Churches  
on hidden roads we cannot reach  
are part of a view made  
commodity. We have privatised  
the uses of the countryside  
as well as the countryside itself.  
No Spitfires patrol the skies.  
Ghostly bunkers sunk in the hills  
cannot defend us from the  
fifth-columnists, risen again  
with their, 'Breathe the air  
and you commit an offence,  
unless you own it,' kind  
of attitude. Across the motorway  
the countryside bailiffs patrol  
a value added landscape  
with views you can pay for  
by the hour. We've got this far  
to look on in defeat - Or trespass  
regardless and speak with our feet  
on the march to set Britain,  
this island of loss, free  
from the justice of the elite.  
Andrew Jordan.



“Civil disobedience  
on grounds of  
conscience is an  
honourable  
tradition in this  
country and those  
who take part in it,  
may in the end be  
vindicated by  
history.”  
Lord Justice  
Hoffman, summing  
up in the Twyford  
Down case.















It was known as the place where pigeons went to die. For 18 years Artillery Mansions - just down to the road from the Houses of Parliament - has decayed from a fashionable residence for ministers and peers to a derelict eyesore. Then the Freedom Network moved in.

# new sq

For many years, the only occupants of Artillery Mansion were a handful of sitting tenants and dozens of pigeons, whose job seemed to be to make ever-growing mounds of dropping on the floors, windows and balconies overlooking 11ew Scotland Yard.

But on the 18th February Artillery Mansions doors were opened to a different kind of resident. As Big Ben boomed one o'clock across the roof tops, some 70 members and supporters of the Freedom Network unfurled a dozen or so banner and declared the long empty Artillery Mansions unofficially open.

The banners had a mixture of messages. Some put it simply, 'London Calling' and 'Hello Mums'. Others relayed the double message of the occupation. '411 FLATS EMPTY FOR 18 YEARS,' said the main banner



another multicoloured message saying, 'I @ CULTURAL CLEARING.' But perhaps the most poignant was the message felt strongly by 'alternative' culture and minority groups alike: 'LET US BE.'

Walking into the building for the first time felt unreal. All those plans, all those meetings and we were now standing in the floor plan that had been passed around so many times.

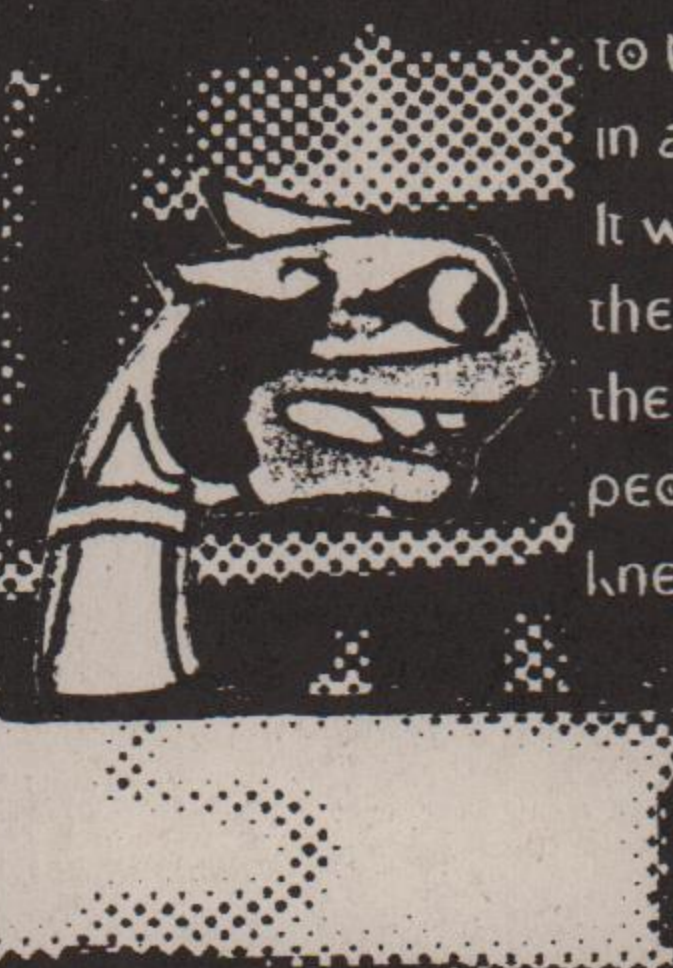
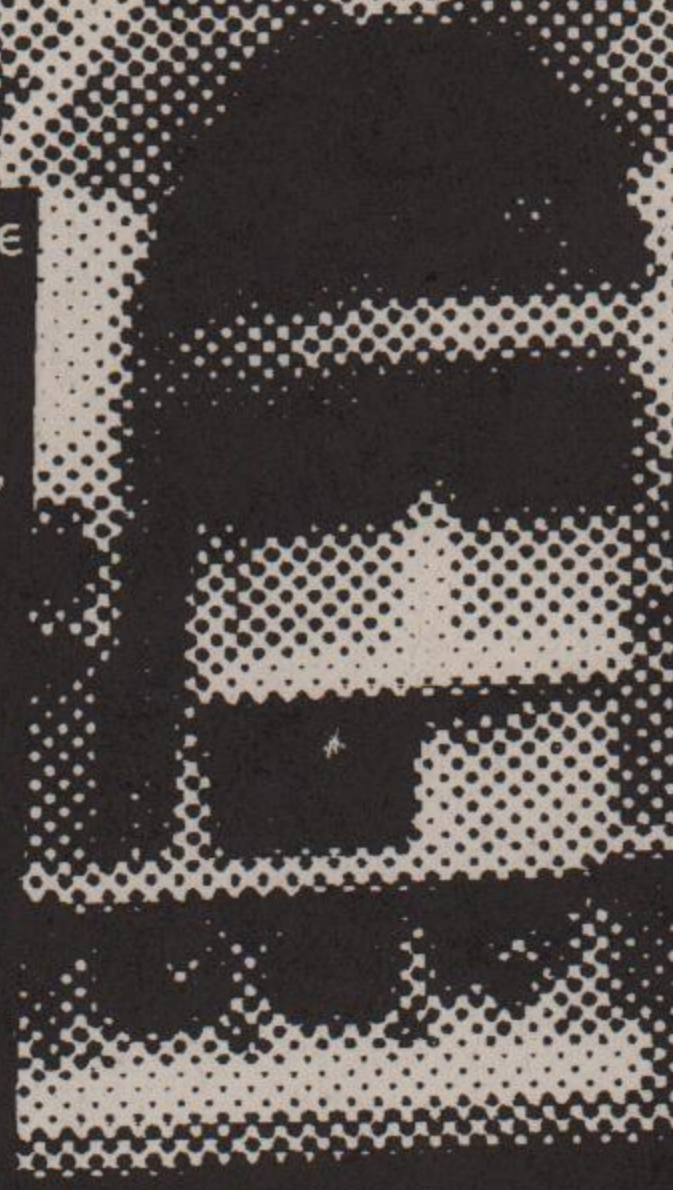
The only major drawback was that the 'forward crew' hadn't been able to fix the lift in the central stairwell which meant that we had to puff up and down the seven flights of stairs, ferrying banners, cups of tea, musical instruments, visitors and rubbish from the cleared estate office on the top floor to the reception area on the ground floor.

The first few hours were incredibly hectic but at the same time, the buzz was extraordinary. You could almost hear the sound of 70-odd heartbeats working overtime. The sound of drumming seemed to be coming from everywhere.

Eco-bards the Space Goats perched themselves on a first floor balcony and serenaded the passers-by in the street who, in turn, bumped into each other as they looked up to read the banners on that strange old building which was normally dark and lifeless.

Only the front block overlooking

above



Victoria Street was being occupied. But it was big enough. Seven floors of derelict flats which used to house the maids and cleaners for the occupants of the larger, more opulent blocks around the central courtyard behind. Stories quickly went around that Marilyn Monroe stayed there together with numerous MPs, ministers and peers.

It wasn't long before the inevitable happened and several police cars pulled up. A delegation went down to meet them, inviting them to come in and have a cup of tea. It was hairy at the time but despite the fact that it was a civil matter and the police had no authority to stop people coming and going, we all knew the way to get round it was to be fluffy!

It worked. Once Detective Chief Inspector John Whelan and his superintendent had looked around, they left us to it. They did however scupper our press conference by temporarily stopping anyone from coming in. Several journalists, radio and camera crews came in later that day and Squatland Yard became a news item. Articles in the Evening Standard, Time Out, the Independent on Sunday and a programme on BBC2 followed later.

What was most overwhelming was the support from the public. Within hours of the protest starting, people were filling the donation buckets. One woman appeared with two bags of food which were pulled up to the first floor in a bucket. Soon the place began to fill up with street sleepers. The

## SAM'S STORY

On January 17th this year, I was arrested for begging and taken to Charing Cross nick. I was begging to support my drug habit. This wasn't the first time but it was going to be the last! While I was being charged, I thought about the mess I was in. The following morning I booked into a drug rehabilitation clinic. After three days, I walked out because of the way it was run. Still with a cocaine problem, I wandered the streets, sleeping in doorways, wasting away. On the 18th February, an organisation known as the Freedom Network opened Artillery Mansions as a squat for anyone who wanted a roof over their head. All kinds of people came here to help clean and tidy the building which had been empty for 18 years. While I was staying there, I decided I wanted to get off the coke. So, instead of going back to another rehab clinic, I got involved in helping to run the squat, which meant I didn't have time to go out begging for drug money. After three weeks, I felt like a normal person and I decided to visit some of the people who helped me kick the habit. While I was visiting one of the No M11 Campaign squats in Wanstead, East London, I was asked if I would like to move into one of their spare rooms, which I did. Since meeting these people who have been labelled smelly, dirty, no-good hippies, I have sorted myself out and I am now doing what I feel is right by expressing my feelings against certain things that the government and Department of Transport are doing. These so-called no good hippies, are doing more for our country than our so-called government. People should realise that it's these people





# Squatlandyard



sound of sweeping, hoovering and hammering came out of the majority of the flats. In the estate office, a generator was set up, a stove installed and the water supply reconnected. Rotas were set up for food-runs, donations buckets, leafleting and manning the foyer to welcome visitors. In the next few days, the foyer became an information centre. Press cutting and posters covered the walls and an old bookcase was filled with publication and info on the Criminal Justice Bill. Leaflets were handed out outside and a donation bucket placed by the door.



All sorts of people stopped by: film crews, local police, councillors, old ladies donating some of their meagre pension money. The first evening, the kitchen table was piled high with boxes of food.

In the weeks that followed, all sorts of events were planned to bring in the public and show them what we were up to. A storytelling evening drew in 40-50 people. The Space Goats put on a lunchtime performance for the local suits and a Freedom Network party held to raise funds.

There were ups and down but whenever I visited, I left smiling. It could have so easily gone wrong. The central stairwell and roof were the only means of escape and the fire risks with people carrying candles around was serious. There was no support from outside and resources were minimal. But somehow the spirit that was conjured up there, held it all together.

Amid the chaos a natural order emerged. The key

## NETWORK

who show respect to everybody. So instead of slating them, talk to them, and you could benefit from them in ways you cannot imagine possible. The Freedom Network, Rainbow Tribe, Dongs Tribe and Flowerpot Tribe are people who care what happens to us and our planet. I would like to say a big THANKS to everyone who helped me rebuild my life back to normal. Who knows, maybe one day the tribes might run the country and solve most of our problems.

was letting the street sleepers do their own thing. It was extraordinary to see them come out of their shells. Many were wary when they first came. Several were very withdrawn. But after the Network have proved that they were trying to convert them to God or some strange cult, they relaxed and for want of a better word, blossomed.

The deal was that anyone could come in as long as they were prepared to help run the place. Drink was out of bounds in public areas. Hard drugs not welcomed.

Thinking about it, this shows what is fundamentally wrong with the System. There are so many rules and regulations and bods breathing down necks, that new ideas are stifled before they've even been allowed to start. The idea of giving street sleepers a bit of respect and faith in their abilities would probably be an anathema to most politicians.

If the project had been given help, funding and understanding from the outside, goodness knows what could have come out of it. How long will it be before the power that be realise that you can't impose this kind of thing on the homeless, you've got to let them do it themselves.

Many of the sleepers said it cost the DSS an average of £200 a week to house them in hostels, often in cramped rooms with only the most basic services. With that money, Squatland Yard could have become a real, viable home for hundreds of people.

An article in the Independent On Sunday was pretty critical of the venture. It pointed out that that organisation of the place fell apart pretty quickly and implied that many street-sleepers weren't interested in setting up a permanent home. The journalist did spend quite along time with several members of the Freedom Network but he didn't include their response to these criticisms. It is true that the organisation did run out of steam. But at the end of the day, at least the Network was doing something to address the housing crisis in Britain and bring the issues to the public at street level. In reality, it was pretty amazing that the squat held together as long as it did, considering it was just a bunch of ordinary people combining their energy and ideas.

The other point overlooked by the article was that while the issue of people sleeping on the streets is a serious one, many have problems that need professional help and support. If we could have got a licence for Artillery Mansions, it would have been the perfect place to house families currently living in bed and breakfast accommodation, particularly families that are too large for many modern council flats. Imagine if we could have got 100 families together at the Mansions. With their energy, diverse skills and combined benefit money, it could have evolved into a self-help scheme that might have given a lot of people lost in the benefits system, some hope and control over their future.

In the end, the inevitable happened. The owners of the building issued an eviction notice. The owner was a consortium of foreign property speculators. It was pretty clear that they were sitting on the building until the economic climate cleared up. In 1992, the Empty Homes Agency had approached the company's solicitors in an attempt to get permission to use the Mansions for short-life housing. They got nowhere.

Things can only get worse. The Criminal Justice Bill will give new powers to remove squatters. Contrary to tabloid beliefs, squatters on the whole are resourceful people who've got enough initiative to move into empty buildings and turn them back into homes. The Bill will make it possible for property owners to apply for an 'Interim Possession Order' without informing the occupants. The first the occupants will know, is when someone turns up on their doorstep and tells them they've got 24-hours to get out. This could affect tenants with unscrupulous landlords just as much as people who make good use of empty buildings.

JEZ from the Squatters Action For Secure Homes explains: 'Even more worrying is the additional clause which takes away the minimal force restriction. Landlords will be able to use as much violence as they like to get you out.'

'The Bill will only push more people onto the streets and leave the majority of the 800,000 empty properties in this country to rot. It's a crying shame that the government refuses to see that squatting is part of the solution, not part of the problem.'

Even some section of the police force are concerned about the new legislation. Sgt Mike Bennet, Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation has been quoted as saying, 'I can foresee police involved in the forcible eviction from premises and those premises remaining empty, boarded up and people saying, "Was it necessary?" I can see the problem of making criminals of people who are desperate to get their lives back in balance.... That's not what I joined the police force for and I don't think many people did.'

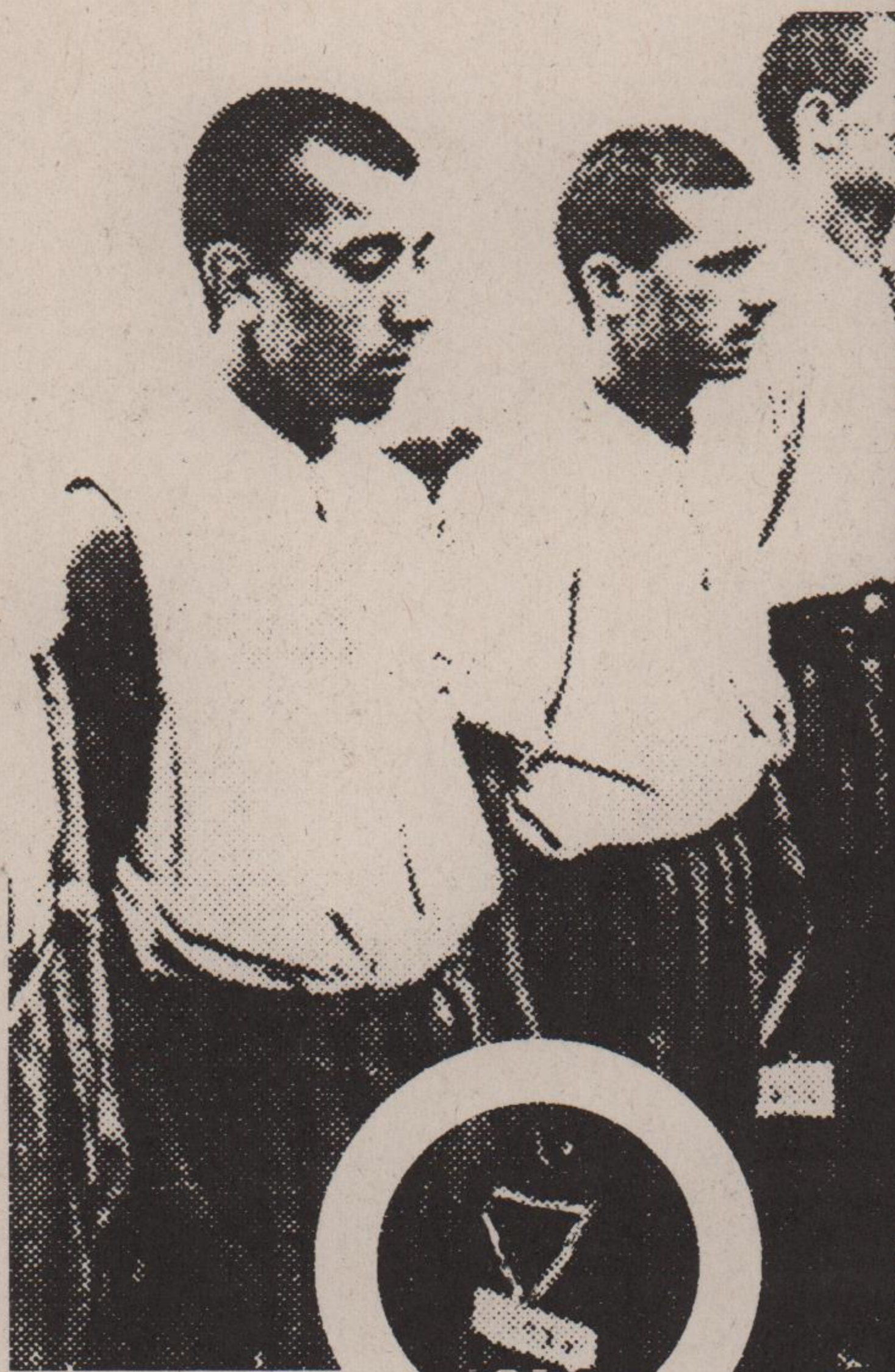
Today Artillery Mansions has been reclaimed by the pigeons once again. 411 flats lie empty and the housing crisis gets worse.



THE SQUATTERS



The more things change, the more they stay the same. The Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill has not just caused outrage among Britain's alternative communities but by more established pressure groups including Liberty and Charter 88. They are all saying the same thing. This new Bill is a serious breach of civil and human rights. Many have compared it with the fascist tactics of Hitler's Third Reich. When you look at this comparison in more details, it becomes even more chilling. 47 years after the Nuremberg Trials overthrew Nazi law, the Tory government is passing legislation that in some cases is almost identical to that issued by Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler and enforced by the SS. It would be wrong to compare the harassment of Britain's travellers and ravers with the outrages meted out on Jews, Sinti and Roma gypsies and dissidents under Hitler. But there are distinct parallels between the Criminal Justice Bill (CJB) and Hitler's dismantling of democracy; a dismantling that began by removing legal protection for those pursuing different lifestyles. What is most worrying is the similarity of the intent underlying the Bill - the enshrinement in law of intolerance and division. I've never been to an outdoor rave and I've never travelled in a New Age vehicle but I find legislation that validates prejudice and hate against minority groups disturbing in the extreme.



SINTI AND ROMA 'GYPSIES' AT SACHSENHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP. THE BLACK TRIANGLE INDICATES THEY ARE 'ASOCIAL'.

# a reich

## the end of the road for travellers

The countryside of 1930s Germany was criss-crossed by the caravans of travelling people. These were mostly Sinti and Roma - the 'gypsies' who were the free-spirited New Age travellers of their time. Like today, groups would wander the country, entertaining at fairs, working on short-term jobs and following mystical beliefs which kept them on the move. Their road to slaughter began with laws that advocated bigotry and intolerance. Travellers' names and fingerprints were registered, their movements restricted, as was their right to claim welfare.

In 1936, the Reich Central Office for the Fight Against the Gypsy Nuisance was established in the headquarters of the Reich Criminal Police in Berlin. The office centralised a system of 19,000 files of Sinti and Roma which contained names, fingerprints and material culled from public registry offices. By 1945, a quarter of a million Sinti and Roma were dead. In concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen, travellers were marked by a black triangle on their trousers. In 1993, the Southern Intelligence Unit, based at Wiltshire police headquarters, began an intelligence drive aimed at logging the traveller community on computer with details of their vehicles, nicknames and associates. Their data base now contains information on thousands of travellers, the majority of whom have committed no offence. Despite the overturning of Germany's racial laws against gypsies after Nuremberg, the persecution continued. In 1953, the Brava Criminal Police set up a 'Travellers' Office' and made use of 24,000 'racial testimonies' gathered by Nazi bureaucrats to continue police harassment.

In England in 1985, the Battle of the Beanfield showed the degree of brutality the police were prepared to descend to, simply to keep a bunch of hippies away from Stonehenge. A convoy of 400 travellers on their way to the Solstice celebrations at Stonehenge were forced into a field where more than 1,000 police stormed the site, trashed the convoy vehicles and beat up their inhabitants. The Battle of the Beanfield was the Kristalnacht of Britain's travellers. One night in 1933, the sound of breaking glass filled the streets of German cities as Nazi thugs ran riot and trashed the homes of Jewish citizens. Both the Kristalnacht and the Beanfield had a similar effect. They put the fear of state-inspired violence into those who were part of the minority. The victimisation of Britain's traveller community continues today.

With as little thought as the Reich authorities gave to closing synagogues in the 1930s, the Tory authorities shut off Stonehenge to those who believed it to be sacred.

Since 1989, Sinti and Roma who have come to Germany to escape the brutality in Romania and the civil war in former Yugoslavia have often been set upon and beaten up by right-wing youths. There are parallels here with the growing number of vigilante groups that are targeting travellers in this country. The Friends, Families and Travellers' Support Group reported seven serious incidents including an attack with an iron bar and threats involving guns, in the first five months of this year alone.

In 1994, the British government will remove the legal requirements for local authorities to provide sites for travellers, therefore withdrawing their basic democratic right to shelter. Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, 'Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.' The CJB will mean that if a two or more people with six or more vehicles, refuse police orders to leave a piece of land (even if it is derelict or unused), they will be arrested and have their vehicles/homes confiscated. This is contrary to Article 17 of the Declaration which says, 'No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property' and Article 22, which adds, 'Everyone, as a member of society, has to right to social security and is entitled to realisation of.....the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.' In 1993, the Gloucester MP Paul Marland embodied the modern spirit of the Gestapo's black triangle. 'We don't call them New Age Travellers in Gloucester,' he said. 'We call them New Age vermin.'

The CJB will make it easier than ever before for police to deprive travellers of their home and harass them with the constant threat of having to move on or be arrested. Did nobody in the House of Commons have the common sense to ask where exactly these travellers are supposed to go? Perhaps John Major has noted the Bavarian government of 1926 which decreed, 'Travellers may not roam about or camp in bands.....Gypsies and travellers who are unable to prove regular employment may be sent to workhouses for up to two years by the responsible police.'

In 1992, John Major declared to the Brighton Tory Conference that travellers were more or less enemies of the state. 'New Age travellers? Not in this age, not in any age,' he said. A meagre attempt at humour by Mr Major and the death knell for the way of life of thousands of peaceful Britons.

## reich ravers

Since the late 1980s, police and local authorities have set out to stop British youth going to gatherings or raves. This years the CJB will, in effect, make outdoor raves illegal. The catch-all clause says that such gatherings can be stopped - even if the organisers have permission from the landowner - if police believe 'by reason of its loudness and duration it is likely to cause series distress to local inhabitants'. This is regardless of whether any complaints have actually been made.

In 1930s Germany, laws, decrees and police actions were developed to keep the youth in line with state-authorised activities. Historians Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann describe the life for youth in 1930s Germany like this: 'Rebelliousness was regarded as resistance and hence a crime by the terroristic institutions of the Third Reich and was dealt with accordingly.'



You might think that Britain is a long way from becoming a Fascist state. But the similarities between the new Criminal Justice Bill and the dictates of Hitler and his fellow persecutors are disturbing to say the least.  
David Monaghan reports.....



# bloody liberty

'Cliques are groupings of juveniles outside the Hitler youth, who lead a separate way of life, whose principals are irreconcilable with the national Socialist world view. Collectively, they reject or are indifferent to their duties towards the national community or to the Hitler Youth and in particular evince a lack of will to conform....'

'Cliques use various names (clique, mob, crowd, pack, shufflers, Edelweiss Pirate etc). Generally there is no fixed organisational structure: the groupings are often only loose and irregular. Sometimes they wear special forms of identification. The cliques mostly consist of young fellows but also some girls too.'

The purpose of the circular was similar to the purpose of the music description in the CJB - totalitarian laws putting as much power as possible in the hands of the State security police and as little as possible in the hands of the courts and individuals. So what's all this got to do with you? Remember this is only the beginning. To update the German freedom activist Pastor Neimuller's words: 'When they came for the travellers, I did not speak out because I wasn't a traveller. When they came for the ravers, I did not speak out because I wasn't a raver. When they came for me, there was no one left to speak out.'

\* Laws are quoted from *The Racial State, Germany 1933-1945* by Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

The victimisation of the Luton's Exodus collective in the last two years has extended to repeated police raids on their free parties and the trashing of their farmhouse base. The harassment became so intolerable that when a member of the collective was arrested, 4,000 young people surrounded Luton police station calling for his release.

In 1992, 400 police, some with dogs, descended on a rave in a disused warehouse in Yorkshire. One party-goer described the scene: 'I looked around and there were police coming at us from everywhere, swinging truncheons. I saw people hitting the floor.' It's interesting to note that laws on confiscation of rave organisers' equipment are more severe than those for heroin dealers.

The clamp down on raves complements John Major's wish to see a future orderly England with 'warm beer, long shadows on country grounds, and old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist.' All that seems to be missing from his dream is the dancing Aryans of the 'German League of Maidens'. This particular speech also has an irony to it. Major was quoting George Orwell's essay, 'The Lion and the Unicorn', much of which is about the urgent need for a socialist revolution! The concern in 1930s Germany, as now, was with a youth element who wore unusual clothes, danced to strange music and had different sexual mores. They were known as the 'Wild Cliques.' Far from being irrelevant to German politics, such was the repression in other areas of German life, that by the end of the war, these jazz-loving kids formed virtually the only real resistance to Hitler. Gangs of tartan-shirted youths wandered around the bomb sites of large German cities looking for Hitler Youth to confront. In Cologne, the 'Edelweiss Pirates' combined music and politics. They chanted drinking songs with lyrics including, 'We're going to get rid of Hitler and he can't do a thing.' In 1944 leaders of the Edelweiss Pirates were found guilty of killing the Cologne Gestapo chief and hung.

During the 1930, the National Socialist government banned records and public playing of jazz and 'hot' music as well as such American artists such as Benny Goodman. A category of 'prohibited youth groups' limited teenage activities solely to government-sanctioned activities. The Reich's version of the Criminal Justice Bill's 'Powers In Relation To Raves' was the 1940 Police Ordinance for the Protection of Youth. This law forbade young people to 'loiter... on streets or in public houses,' after dark. Those who defied the ban faced a maximum prison sentence of four weeks 'youth custody' - eight weeks less than the maximum prison sentence that today's youth could face for preparing for, waiting for or attending a rave, (where they refuse police orders to leave).

On 25 October 1944, a circular from the Reichsfuhrer-SS and the Chief of the German Police, Heinrich Himmler, reported on the 'fight against youth cliques.' Like the British government's instruction to arrest those who listen to music 'wholly or predominately characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats,' the Fuhrer's police got detailed instructions on spotting Reich ravers. Himmler explained;



A 'WILD CLIQUE' BEFORE.....



AND AFTER THEIR ARREST, EASTER 1940



Exodus, movement of Jah people. If there is on

collective. Miss Pod went to visit Luton's local heroes.....

TWO YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF FRIENDS, MOST OF WHOM HAD GROWN UP ON LUTON'S LEWSEY FARM ESTATE, HAD A DREAM. In a town where almost every street corner is propped up by a group of bored teenagers and where some estates have an unemployment rate of 40%, this group of friends knew they had to do something to get their community's heart beating again.

One of those friends, Glen Jenkins, takes up the story. 'There was a pub in Luton where we all used to go. You could listen to reggae, play pool and there was a good black/white mix. When it was closed down in 1991, there was nowhere left to go. We ended up sitting in our front rooms wondering what we could do. That was when we decided we had to get something together.'

Their idea was simple: to bring all their friends together a put on parties in derelict buildings and country spaces. These parties would be free but a donation bucket would be passed around to collect vital funds. But Exodus's parties were not put on simply for partying's sake. The aim behind the venture was to raise enough money to give their community something back. Glen had been a train driver and ASLEF shop steward. But after completing his training he handed in his notice. 'When they started to change the system on the railways, I could see the dangers ahead and I didn't want to be part of it,' he explains.

Glen continues: 'The original idea was to provide our own gatherings and spread the 'Get Up, Stand Up' message. We needed to show people that they have to defend their rights. We've got to stop this country from ending up like America where there's nothing left for people at the bottom.'

Within a year of starting their party operation, the numbers attending had grown from 200 to 10,000. 'The big difference was,' explains 19-year-old Steve, another Exodus member, 'We weren't going to go out and buy ourselves BMWs or anything. We put all the money back into the parties. We built our own sound system. We told everyone, this is your party, you paid for it and it belongs to you.'

Through a contact in the local police, Exodus learned that the crime rate in Luton dropped by 6% during the same period of time. 'It's obvious,' says Steve. 'What do you do if you're unemployed and you have to raise £25 to get into a rave. You go out and steal it. The way we did it, people could donate whatever they could afford. It was fair.'

At their first squat, an empty red brick block in the centre of Luton, Exodus would spread the party message through word

M  
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of mouth. On the night of a party itself, hundreds of people would gather in a large car park opposite. The collective used their own vehicles to lead the 'convoy' to an undisclosed party venue.

### Exodus movement of the people.

The collective's parties might have been a temporary distraction from a dead-end existence in a dying town but parties on their own don't cure community problems. Exodus knew this all too well. Their first offshoot was Long Meadow Farm, a 17 acres wedge of buttercup-covered hillside between the M1 motorway and an Inter-City railway line. The former pig farm had been bought by the Department of Transport to make way for an M1 extension but money for the project had dried up and the farm had been left to rot.

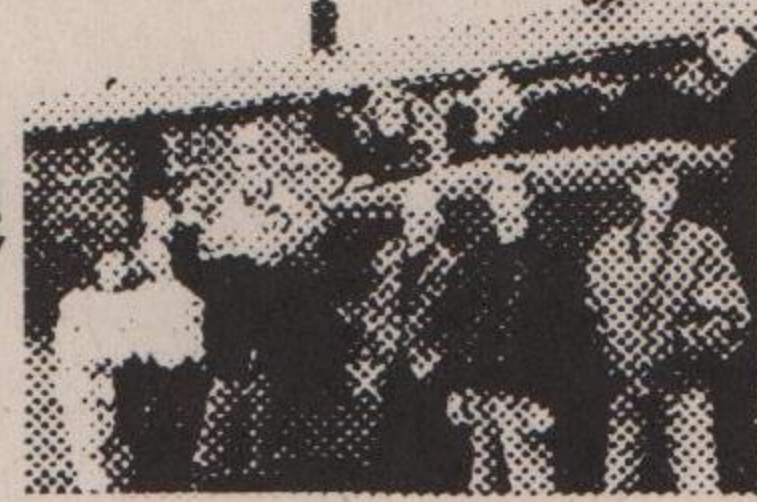
Steve pulls out a pile of 'before and after' photos from his pocket. 'The place was a dump,' he explains. 'Most of the buildings were falling down and there was rubbish

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farm chemicals everywhere.' Today, Long Meadow is home to half a dozen goats, a sheep, an exotic selection of chickens, several rabbits and a family of Vietnamese Pot Bellied pigs complete with five piglets. Most of the animals have been donated by supporters. 'A lot of the local kids are brought up



e collective within DIY Culture that has, against  
11 odds, created a blueprint for rekindling the  
community spirit, it has to be



the Exodus

on concrete and boredom.  
When they come and visit you  
can see their eyes light up,'  
says Ruth, who had just  
returned from the local commu-  
nity centre where she was help-  
ing to make children's cos-  
tumes for Luton's carnival.  
Exodus managed to persuade a  
local business to donate four  
lorry loads of pallets which

potentially explosive situations but their single-mindedness and adherence to their policy  
of non-violent direct action prevented potential flashpoints from developing.

**Open your eyes and look within.** In September 1992,  
police set up a roadblock near an Exodus party and took over a local cricket club as an  
operations centre. 'We told everyone at the party that there were between 50 and 100  
police outside,' Glen recalls. 'We asked them if they wanted to go home or stay. It was  
clear that they wanted to party to go on. We stayed until midnight and then moved out.  
As we left, we were stopped by a road block. We called out to the convoy, "Keys out, all  
up front." It was noisy but we managed to keep people calm. It was clear that the police

had no grounds to stop  
us and lost control of the  
situation. In the end they  
had no choice but to let  
us go.'

The following month, an  
Exodus vehicle on its way  
to another party when it  
was again stopped by  
police. Seeing what had  
happened, a second car  
turned back to alert the

# S I V E

were used to rebuild the farm  
outhouses together with new  
barn.

But the local police weren't  
happy. Not happy at all. As  
the gatherings grew, Exodus  
found themselves at the centre  
of a massive police clampdown.  
With no apparent attempt to  
enter into constructive dia-  
logue, Bedfordshire  
Constabulary lifted up their col-  
lective boot and stomped on  
Exodus hard. Their squatted  
base was raided three times in  
as many months, members

convoy gathering in Luton. 'Over the top of the hill, the tribe appeared,' Glen recalls.  
'There had to be 2-3,000 people in their cars. Six cars drove past the police cars and  
blocked off the road. Again the police were overwhelmed and they backed off,' says Glen.

By  
this

# B U T

point, Exodus realised that this situation could not continue and approached a local police  
officer. Two weeks later, Chief Inspector Mick Brown appeared at one of their parties and  
invited the collective to talk. 'We explained that our idea was to set up a community cen-

# S I V E

were arrested and then released  
without charge and their equip-  
ment confiscated. Time and  
time again, the collective found  
themselves in the thick of

tre,' Glen continues. 'We told them we had managed to restrain any possible violent con-  
frontations. By our numbers we had shown that our ideas were popular and trouble-free.'  
Glen acknowledges that as their parties grew, they needed help and advice on safety.  
After a series of meetings, the local police provided fire chiefs and health and safety offi-





# 'We told everyone, you paid for it and

# 'We're not drop outs. If anyth doesn't have a place for us, so

# UNDERSTOOD THE GO RESPECT YOU HAVE TO



There is a need to travel  
There is a need to squat  
There is a need to dance  
There is a need for community  
There is a need to communicate  
There is a need for open spaces  
There is a need for tolerance  
There is a need to celebrate  
There is a need for protest  
There is a need to be HEARD.

POW WOW NOW

cers to inspect the party venues. Chief Inspector Brown went so far as to advertise in local papers for safe, legal venues.

**Are you satisfied with the life you're living?** But just when it looked like the situation was calming down, trouble flared up again. 'We'd squatted an empty hotel, the Oakmore, to highlight the housing situation in Luton,' Glen explains. 'We told people we'd match every £10 they spent on doing up their rooms. Then the police attitude changed. They'd just been on the front page of the local paper under the heading 'Unlikely Alliance Seeks Solution.' But now they were saying that we were encouraging civil disobedience. Chief Inspector Brown disappeared out of the game.'

Less than two weeks later, the Oakmore Hotel was raided. Then, at the end of January 1993, Operation Anagram led to police raiding Long Meadow Farm. Sound equipment was confiscated and 36 members of the collective were arrested. 'It was Bedfordshire police's attempt to stop us once and for all,' claims Glen. 'The operation was designed to discredit us and take away our only source of income.'

The operation led to one of the most dramatic nights Luton has seen in quite a few years. When Exodus's supporters discovered what had happened, 4,000 people gathered outside Luton police station calling for their release. 'We were singing Marley songs and trying to show the cordon of police outside the station that we were peaceful people,' says Steve. The crowd

stayed until 4am. Two hours later, all 36 members inside the station were released without charge.

In the weeks that followed, Exodus changed their tactics. 'Every week, we'd have a gathering,' Glen explains. 'Not a party, just a gathering. We wanted the police to show themselves and then we'd disperse. The first time, we read out a statement saying that parties would be postponed pending negotiations with police.'

**We know where we're going. We know where we're from.** The following week, the collective were stopped by a police roadblock. 'It was obvious why they chose this spot,' says Steve pointing to the row of suburban houses on either side. 'They were trying to create a public order situation. A quarter of a mile further up, the road is deserted, no houses, nothing. Why didn't they stop us there?'

Despite the formidable police presence, the collective stuck to their 'Massive But Passive,' resistance. 'They had dogs,' Arms, one of the collective's DJs, continues. 'They had riot vans parked up in a side street. They wanted a confrontation. But we weren't going to give it to them. We had 500 cars behind us and we told them "We're not fighting but we're not going away either." When they brought out their dogs, we brought out ours.' Beds Police 0 - Exodus 4.

The police's parting shot came in March 1993 when they launched Operation Ashanti to evict the residents of the Oakmore Hotel. 'We had half an hour to get out in the snow with no vehicles,' Glen adds. The hotel was still empty in July this year.

To add to the mayhem, Exodus had a drugs trial hanging over their heads. During a raid on Long Meadow Farm, police claimed they had discovered two packets of Ecstasy. Eight people were arrested. Much of the local press had a field day, branding the collective drug-dealing anarchists. A year later, the Exodus trial came to court. During the case, it was revealed that an officer managed to locate two packs of ecstasy in pitch darkness within minutes of entering the house. The jury returned a not guilty verdict.



CYNICISM IS JUST AN EXCUSE FOR INACTION

"IF YOU DON'T STAND FOR SOMETHING YOU FALL FOR ANYTHING."  
GuilFIN

# this is your party, it belongs to you.

ing, we're force outs. Society,  
we've had to create our own. **THEY**  
**LDEN RULE: TO GET**  
**GIVE RESPECT FIRST.**

"THERE ARE THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE:  
THOSE WHO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN  
THOSE WHO WATCH THINGS HAPPEN  
AND THOSE WHO WONDERED WHAT HAPPENED"  
GuilFIN: Guildford Free Information Network:  
PO Box 217, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6FF

DIY OR DIE!



Despite being denounced by John Carlisle, MP for Luton North, much of the local community, including John Jefferson, the Labour councillor for the Marsh Farm ward, actively support Exodus's aims. Perhaps Mr Carlisle should bear in mind Bob Marley's words, 'The rain don't fall on one man's house.'

Above all, the collective understand the golden rule; to get respect you have to give respect first. From the outset, they managed to stay away from cliquiness and win the confidence of the ordinary people around them. So far this summer, they have been asked to take part in three community events. At Luton carnival they put on a strong show complete with sound system, information boards and several of the farm animals putting in a guest appearance. The collective now has a license from the Department of Transport for Long Meadow Farm and there are no plans for development before 1998.

**We're leaving Babylon, we're going to our father land.**

But the most inspiring of Exodus's projects is HAZ (Housing Action Zone) Manor, a former hospice set in six acres on the outskirts of Luton. Exodus is now officially a housing co-operative and they are busy

making their dream come true.

The hospice itself is being converted into flats for homeless people, workshops, a communal cafe and bar area, a dark room, recording studio, exercise room and communal kitchen.

'Anyone with a good idea can come here and make it happen,' says Steve. Outside, a vegetable garden has already been planted up and there are plans to make the back meadow into an adventure playground.

'Local people realise that we're doing the community good,' says Steve.

'The papers talk about the number of people sleeping on the streets, but they don't recognise the number of young people who are sleeping on friend's sofas or with their parents because they can't afford a place of their own. We're not drop outs. If anything, we're force outs. The system doesn't have a place for us, so we've had to create our own.'

Exodus has also been given a three year lease on HAZ Manor and a grant to help with renovation. 'But most of this has been achieved through free time and pooled dole cheques,' says Stu, another Exodus member. 'We work in 24-7 mode. That's 24-hours a day seven days a week. I know it's

the right way when I look at my parents. They've worked for almost 50 years and they still haven't got any security. In a lot of ways, they're no better off than when they started. At least, here we're building a future.'

It's no coincidence that the collective has the same name as the Bob Marley song. A picture of Marley looks down from the wall in the communal sitting room. His words are quote frequently through our conversations. 'Marley's words are timeless,' explains Steve. 'He is the symbol of Peace, Love, Unity and Struggle. For every step we have taken, Marley has a song.' He smiles and adds, 'The way I see it, God means good. If you put your efforts into good thoughts and good actions, you will be rewarded. We're proof of that.'

As a journalist, I'm supposed to be objective. I'm meant to give you the good side and the bad side. But after my day with Exodus I honestly couldn't fault them. In a country full of disintegration and despair, they come across as a bright beacon on a lonely landscape. They have fire in their eyes and hope in their hearts. They are exactly the kind of people the government would have us believe are no-hopers, a burden on society. But with no official backing, no funding, no nothing, they've achieved a small miracle. They have shown their community that there is another way.

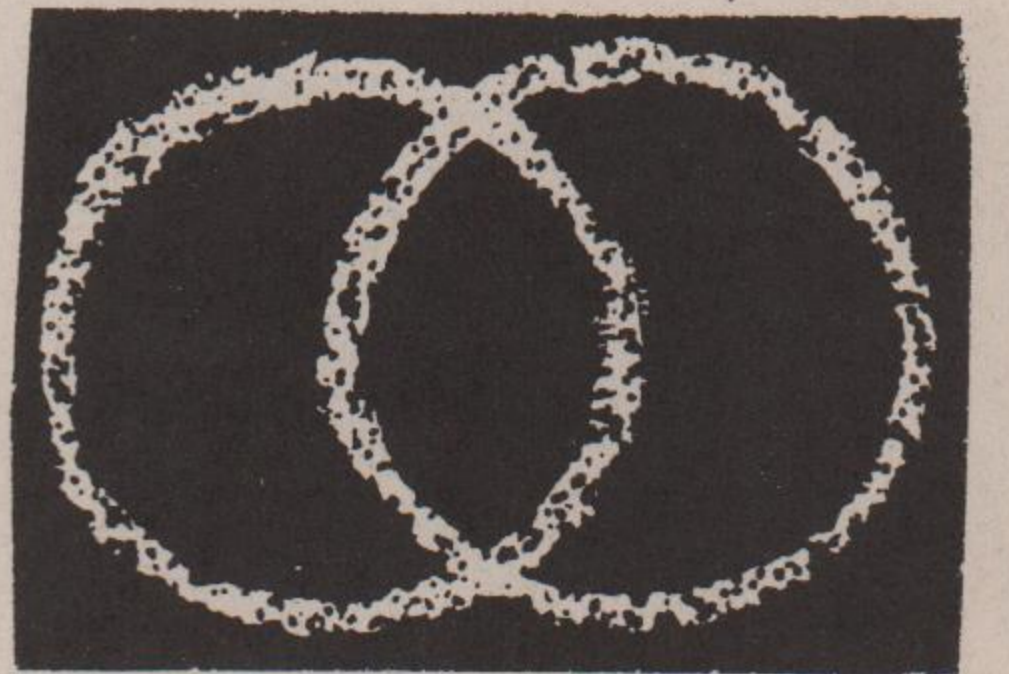
If you would like to get in touch with Exodus call Glen on (0582) 508936 or Elaine on (0582) 477682.



# The Year of the Dragon

Rituals, runes, dragons, and goddesses.

Blessed be, the Pagans are back to reclaim the spirit of the land....



HOBO SIGN FOR 'DON'T GIVE UP'

You may have heard the drumming drifting across the night where in the British countryside. You may even have heard the chanting that recalls the spirit of another age. What is becoming clear from all the alternative activity that has been pushing up from the underground in the past few years is that there is a distinct spirituality underlying the new green generation.

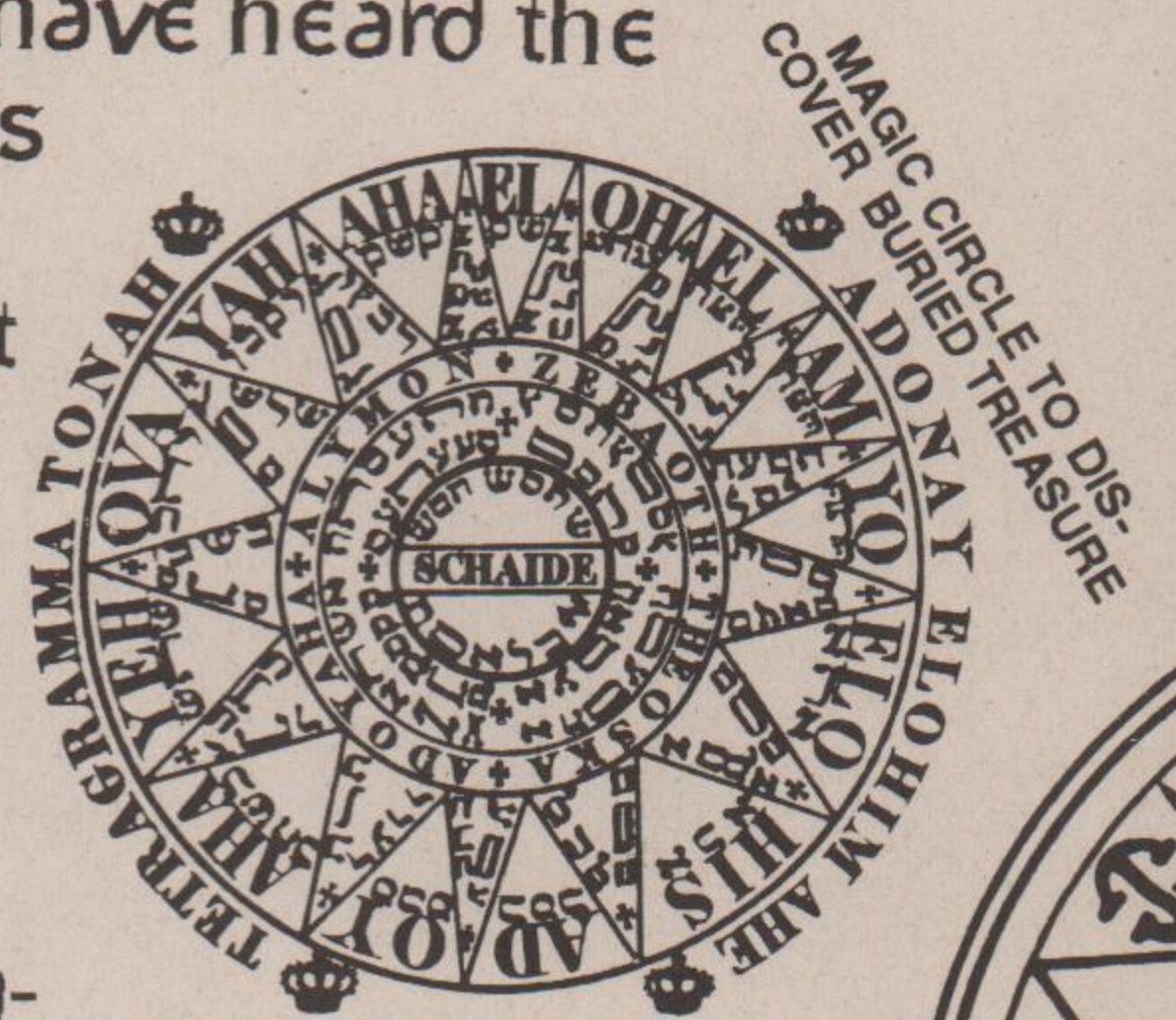
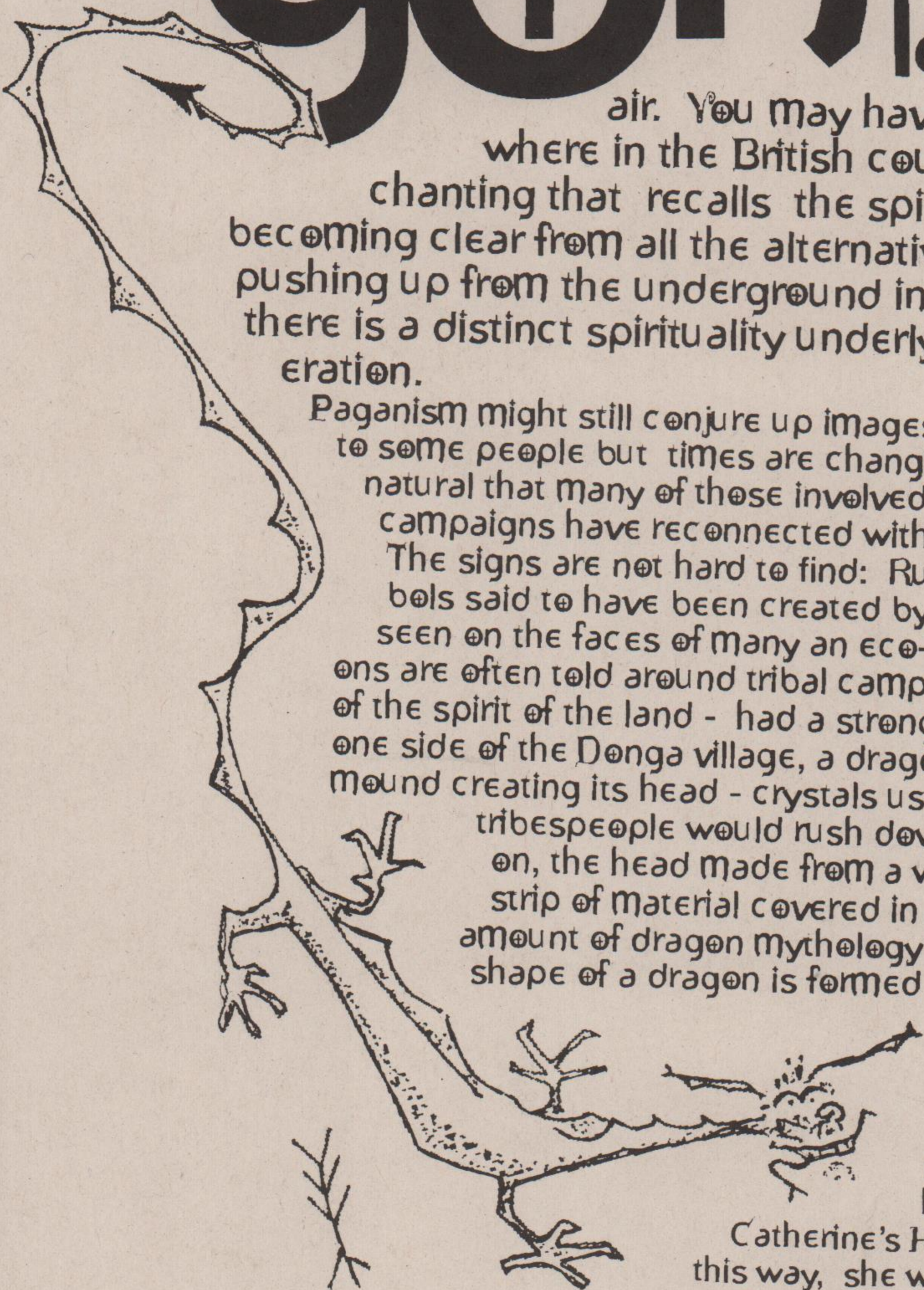
Paganism might still conjure up images of witches and broomsticks to some people but times are changing. In some ways, it's only natural that many of those involved in grass-roots environmental campaigns have reconnected with the spirit of our Pagan past.

The signs are not hard to find: Runes, the ancient magical symbols said to have been created by the northern god Odin, can be seen on the faces of many an eco-warrior. Tales of goddess and dragons are often told around tribal camp fires. At Twyford Down, the dragon - the symbol of the spirit of the land - had a strong presence in the Dongas Tribe's activities. Along one side of the Dongas village, a dragon-shaped trench had been dug with a larger mound creating its head - crystals used for its eyes. On many of their later actions, the tribespeople would rush down the hillside carrying a brightly coloured dragon, the head made from a wooden frame and the billowing body from a long strip of material covered in patterns and symbols. There is also certain amount of dragon mythology related to Twyford Down. It's said that the shape of a dragon is formed by a series of snaky ridges and hills that runs from St. Catherine's Hill, opposite the Dongas' former village, to Old Winchester Hill some ten miles away.

The story goes that when the dragon's life was put under threat from the M3 extension, she shifted her position and placed her head under St.

Catherine's Hill. Apparently, when the dragon moves place in this way, she will call up a tribe of people who will come together to defend her. A slightly different version says that the new road

would cut across the dragon's neck, severing her head. Again, to defend her life, she called up a tribe. Whether or not you believe this kind of mythology, it is certainly strange that a tribe of people, none of whom had any previous experience of tribal living, should appear on a hillside in 1990s Middle England.





Just before Christmas last year, I met up with a group of Dongas who had moved up to the No M11 Link Campaign in Wanstead, East London. It was a few days before the Winter Solstice, the longest night and one of the most important dates on the pagan calendar. The group were making plans to head off the countryside for the celebrations. 'Really, Christmas means nothing to me,' said Ben, an elfin figure with a shock of shaggy hair and layers of holey woollen jumpers. 'The Solstice is a natural time to celebrate. It marks the change in cycles and celebrate the rebirth of the summer sun. December 25th is just another day to us.' 'It's not like our official religion or anything,' explained Busker Paul. 'Different people do different things. Some take a lot of interest in pagan rituals and ceremonies while some people become tuned in without even realising it.' Paganism, they explained, is more implicit in their respect for the natural world. 'You just do what comes naturally,' Paul said. 'On both the summer and winter Solstice, everyone has a special energy and when that energy comes together, it's very exciting. You never know what's going to happen but it usually turns into a stonking good party!'

As the Dongas have become stronger as a campaigning force, so too has their spiritual connection. 'You just let it develop naturally,' Paul continued. 'Christianity leaves me cold. It's all about dogma and patriarchal values. I'd rather take my influences from nature any day.' 'I think some people have problems with getting their parents to understand them,' said Paul. 'My mum's great. But I can see her any time and I'd prefer to do it when I really want to rather than because I feel I have to. This year, most of us have decided that because we've broken away from the system, we should stay true to our way of life.'

Fraggle, one of the few who went home for Christmas, added, 'To me Christmas is an ordinary day but my parents blackmail me. They say it wouldn't be the same without me. It's nice to be together as a family. But a few days is quite enough!' Many of the Dongas main events and actions have been hinged around the most important days in the pagan calendar. The May Day celebration of Beltane, a celebration of fertility, light and hope has brought together many tribal groups to sacred sites across the country. This year's Beltane saw hundreds of people gather at the

Solsbury Hill protest camp, near Bath, dubbed the second Twyford Down.

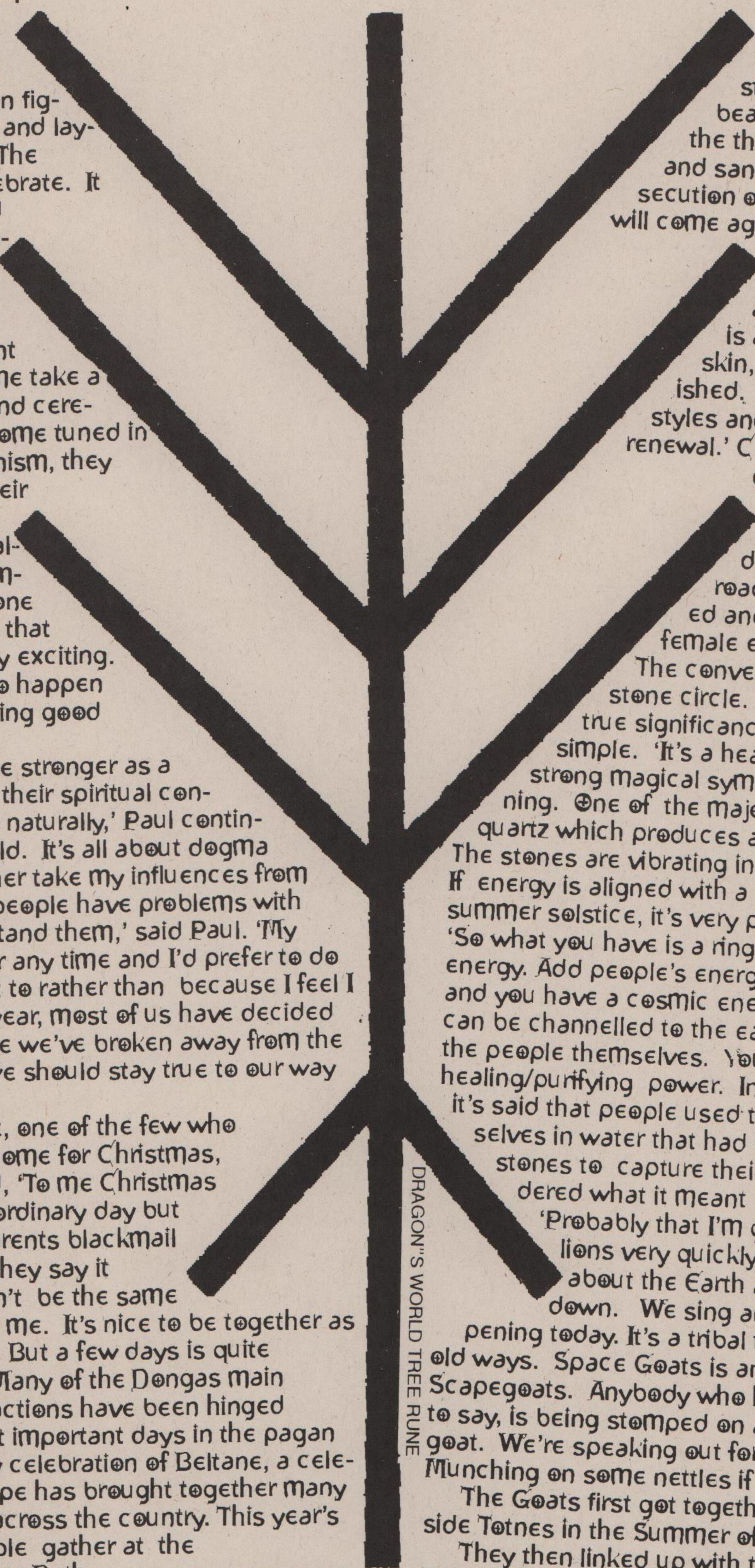
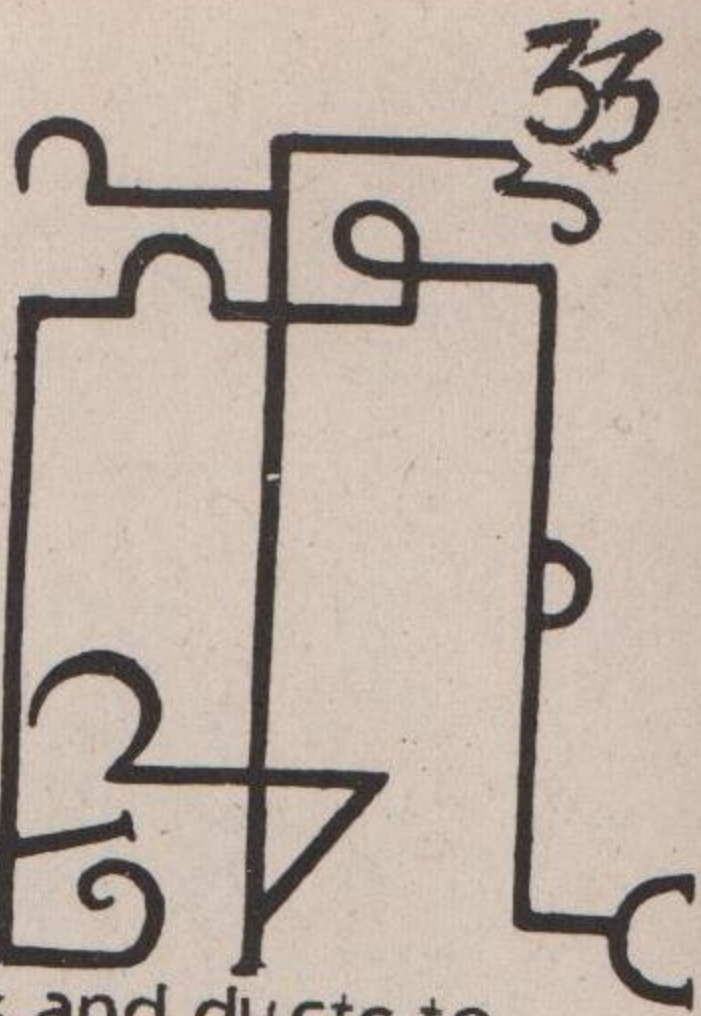
On the night of the Solstice itself, I travelled down to Avebury Circle in Wiltshire and discovered members of the Rainbow Tribe and eco-bards, the Space Goats, had travelled down from London in a large green bus. They'd spent the day exploring West Kennet

Long Barrow - an ancient burial site - and the strange man-made 130 ft Silbury Hill. The night was cold and clear but the bus was cozy inside - pine panels, pot plants, a little stove and sink, a shower and cushions and duets to keep out the cold. Lizzie Rainbow stood at the stove chopping up stuff for a veggie stew, surrounded by pots of beans and spices. At the back of the the bus Mel took up her guitar and sang a haunting song of the persecution of 'witches' and how their time will come again. Someone handed Rainbow Pete a solstice present. It turned out to be a pair of socks. 'The Solstice is a bit like shedding an old skin,' said Mel when she'd finished. 'Time to get rid of old life styles and welcoming a period of renewal.' Clive, the Space Goat's digeridoo player, explained why they came to Avebury. 'It's one of the last places that doesn't have a bloody great road going through it. Its isolated and in-tact. There's a lot of female energy here.'

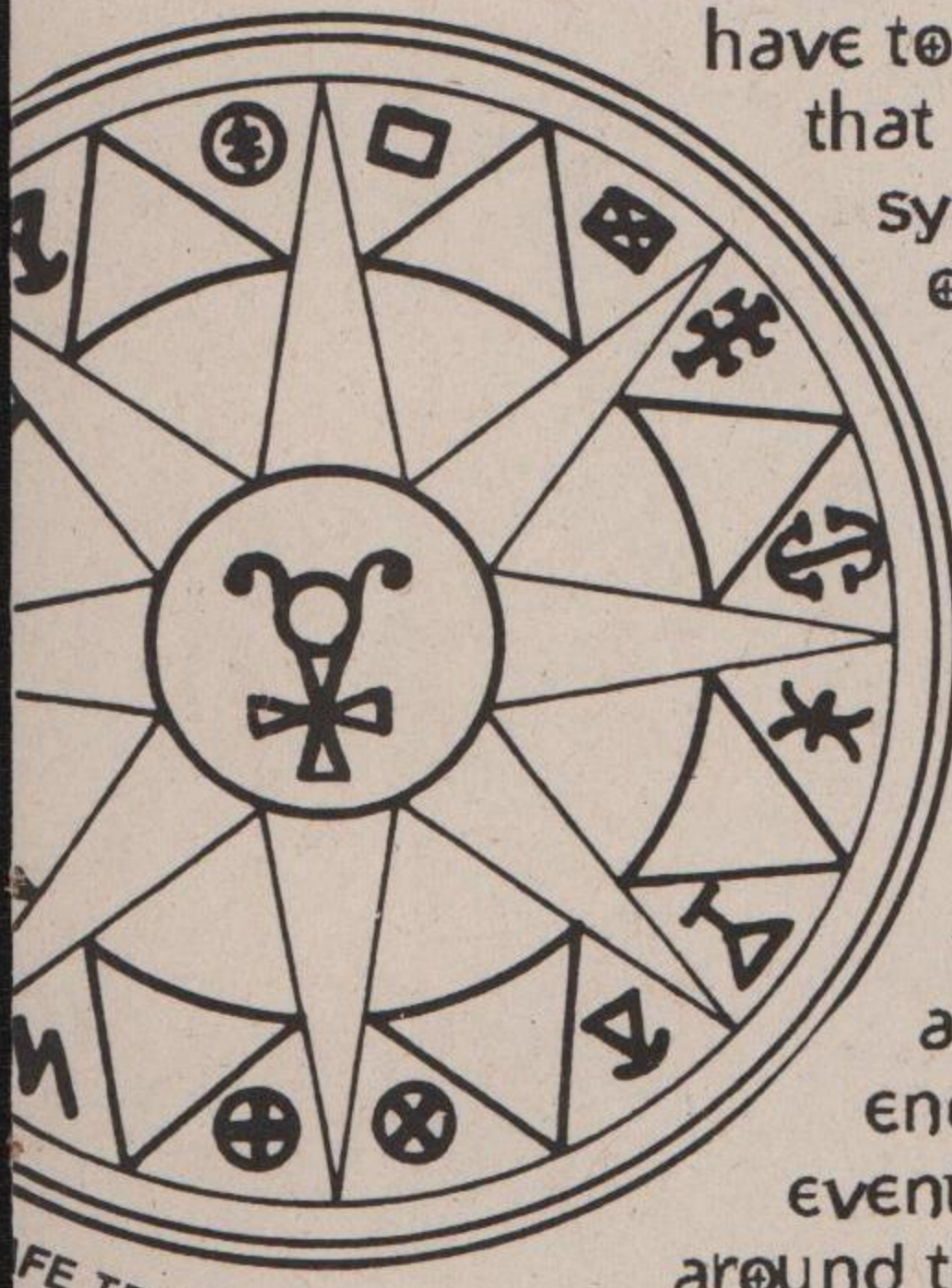
The conversation turns to Avebury's stone circle. Mystery still surrounds the true significance of the ring. Clive says it's simple. 'It's a healing place. The circle is a strong magical symbol - no end and no beginning. One of the major properties of the stones is quartz which produces an electromagnetic field. The stones are vibrating in that energy field. If energy is aligned with a leyline or mid-summer solstice, it's very powerful. So what you have is a ring of natural energy. Add people's energy to that and you have a cosmic energy that can be channelled to the earth and to the people themselves. You create a healing/purifying power. In old days, it's said that people used to wash themselves in water that had been poured over the stones to capture their healing qualities.' I wondered what it meant to be a Space Goat? 'Probably that I'm going to get fed to the lions very quickly,' Clive laughs. 'We sing about the Earth and the crap that is going down. We sing and talk about what's happening today. It's a tribal thing, going back to the old ways. Space Goats is an anagram for Scapegoats. Anybody who had got anything decent to say, is being stomped on and turned into a scapegoat. We're speaking out for all those people. Munching on some nettles if you like!'

The Goats first got together in a crop circle outside Totnes in the Summer of '92. They then linked up with the Dongas Tribe at their Beltane Festival on Twyford Down. They are now 'honorary Dongas' travelling around the country spreading the eco-word. They have deep respect for the Dongas' commitment. 'They're peaceful people

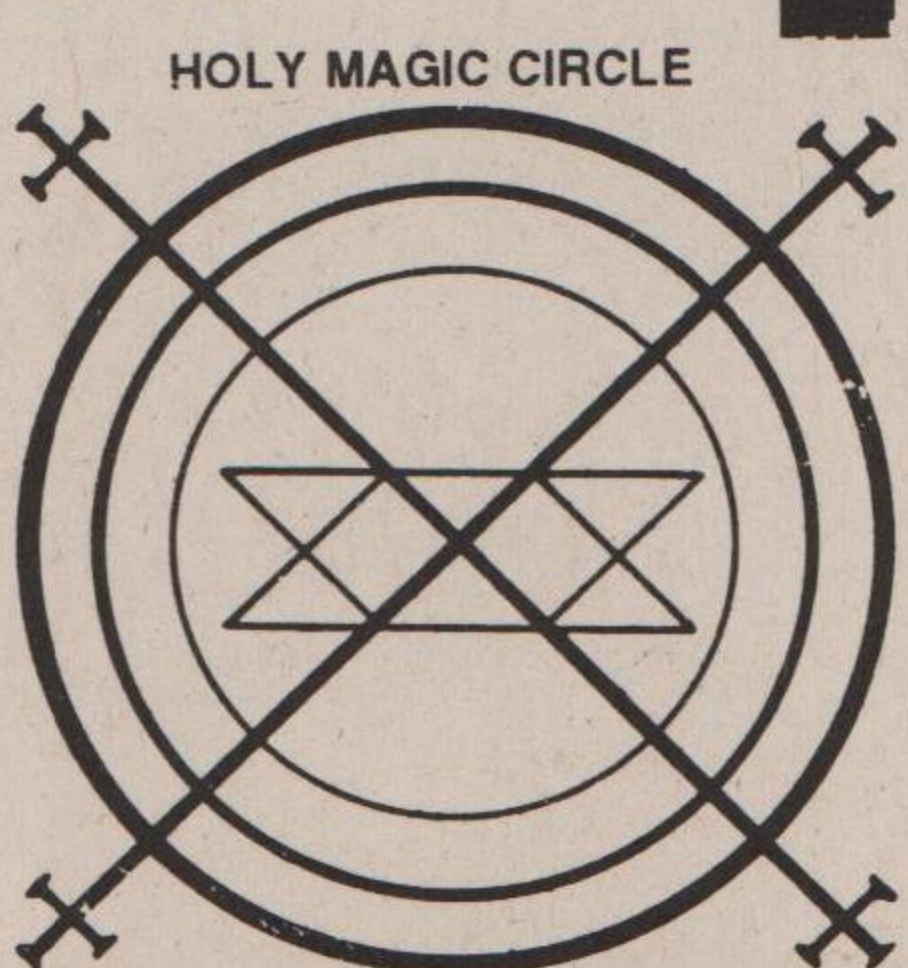
MAGIC SEAL OF SPIRIT PRINCE ASHIKAS



DRAGON'S WORLD TREE RUNE



LIFE TRAVEL



HOLY MAGIC CIRCLE



ICELANDIC RUNE VICTORY



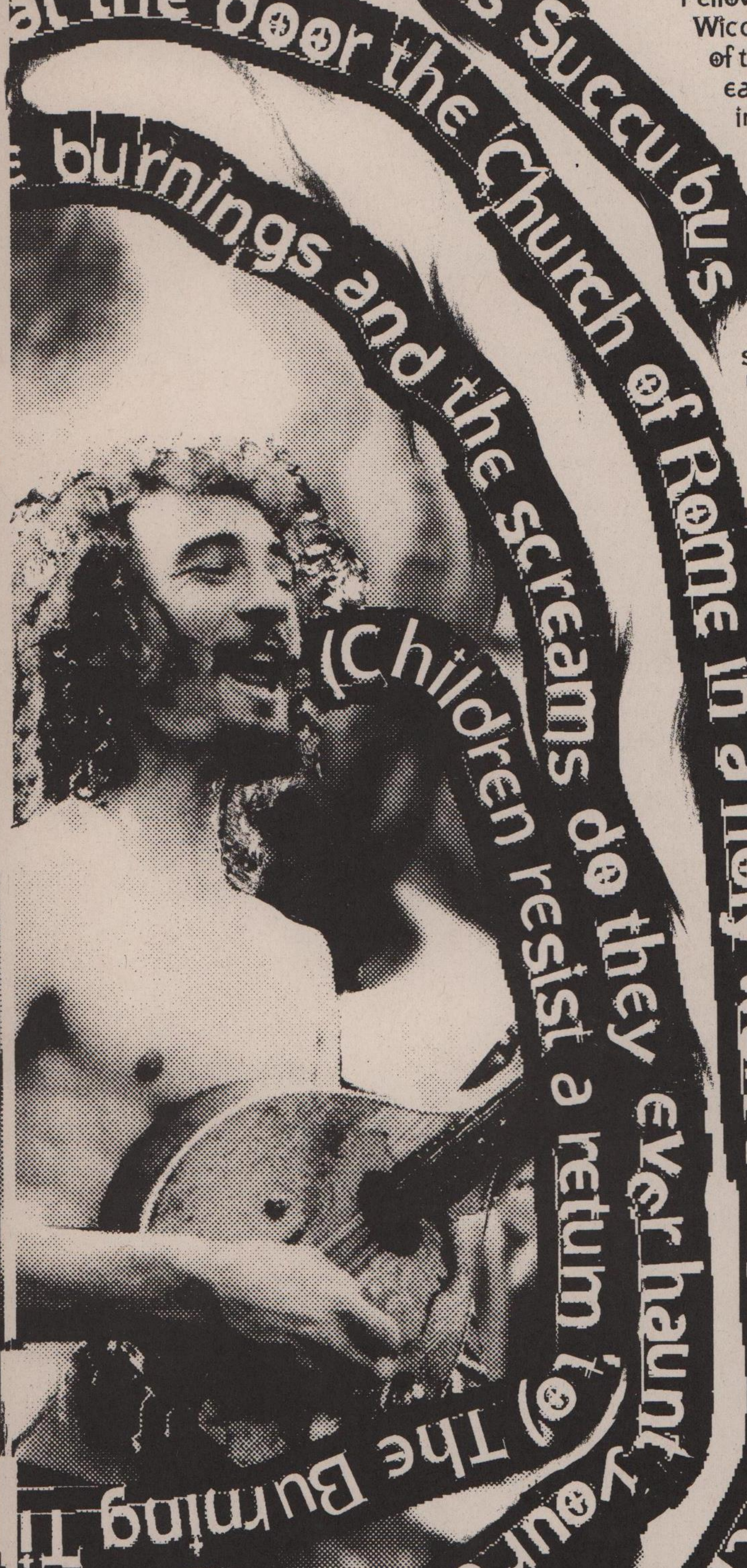
NORDIC RUNE: DRAGON'S EYE







take! - Incubus Succubus  
 at the door the Church of Rome in a holy war. They broke  
 burnings and the screams do they ever haunt  
 (Children resist a return to the Burning Ti  
 our dreams! There  
 children at the wheel in t



The event was the Magickal Conference, an unprecedented gathering of pagan orders from around Britain including the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (the three different grades of Druidry), the Fellowship of Isis, Progressive Wicca, ODINSHOF (followers of the northern tradition) and eastern influenced orders including the Temple of Psychick Youth.

The conference, held at London's Conway Hall, brought in hundreds of pagans and non-pagans. Following a day of rituals, speeches, and a bit of pagan slapstick, the chairs were pushed back and everyone joined hands in a Spiral Dance. The whole conference danced round the hall in ever decreasing rings. Finally, a breathless hush filled the hall before everyone raised their arms and shouted Blessed Be!

The event was held to raise money for the Dragon Environmental Group, a group of eco-warriors who combine magickal work with conservation and campaigning. One of the event's organisers explained, 'We're all part of a greater thing. What you do to nature, you're doing to yourself. That's what links all these people. What Dragon is doing is getting environmentalists back in touch with the sacredness of the earth.'

Dragon first became active with the campaign to save SE London's Oxleas Woods from the bulldozer. They helped organise sponsored walks, joined in with a production of Shakespeare's 'As You Like It', instigated a Save Oxleas postcard campaign and published several leaflets and an information booklet. Unlike many pagan groups, Dragons aren't afraid to be open about their beliefs.

'Originally, we told the Oxleas campaign that we were a spiritual group,' explains co-ordinator Adrian Harris. 'Then we decided it was stupid. What were we afraid of? We came out and told them we were pagans. Well, the sky didn't fall down, so we thought, this is the way to do things.'

More recently, Adrian and the London-based members of Dragon have linked up with the No M11 Link Campaign in Wanstead as well as joining the Freedom Network's campaign against the Criminal Justice Bill.

Members are also involved in conservation projects - clearing rubbish from green areas, tree planting and generally looking after open spaces. 'We form a relationship with nature in a very practical way as well as defending the earth,' says Adrian. Members are kept informed of current campaigns through a newsletter which comes out on the eight most sacred days of the

pagan calendar. 'We usually focus on 3 to 4 campaigns each letter,' says Adrian. 'We also try to get people to lobby the Government by letter writing. A lot of people don't realise how effective letter-writing can be. It's something that people can do if they don't feel comfortable on the front line.'

Dragon is particularly worried about the Criminal Justice Bill. 'Apart from the destruction of our countryside by the Department of Transport, the Bill indirectly affects pagan worship. The woods are our temples. The trespass laws mean that we could well be stopped from gathering there.'

On the magickal side, (magick is spelt with a 'k' so people don't get confused with party magicians), Dragon combine eco-action with eco-ritual.

Members work behind the scenes using chanting, drumming and positive visualisation. 'We work with earth energy or dragon power - raising the dragon to protect the earth,' says Adrian.

'Visualisations involve thinking of a picture of how you would like something to be in the future and willing it to happen.' Dragon has drawn up its own special bind rune, the World Tree Rune, a combination of magickal symbols.

'It has a special focus for environmental change,' Adrian adds. 'The main components are energy, strength and determination, healing and growth.' Visually, it's a series of lines which are drawn on talismans and hung around the neck. Every Sunday, the 150 members dotted around the country, focus on their individual runes and charge them up. The World Tree Rune has also been buried all over Britain in sites which are under threat from development. Could eco-magick be the reason why the Government dramatically back down from Oxleas Woods' road scheme? 'It's a new weapon for the anti-roads campaign!' says Adrian. 'We've hit a nerve here with Eco-magick and we're bringing it straight to the front line. A lot of campaigners are pagans but don't realise it. They've tuned into the natural cycle and wonder of things without putting a name to it. 'He continues, 'Pagans don't have a patriarchy or power structure. There's no priest plugged into God. It's for everyone to worship and do their own thing.'

The world Tree Rune has appeared in many different places including New Squatland Yard and on the faces of campaigners at Wanstead and Twyford Down. 'Often we put them on walls, diggers, and trees. It's like tribal markings,' says Adrian.

'It really freaks out the security guards. Especially the Nigerian ones. They're not too keen on the drumming either. They're more sensitive to the spirit of what we're doing'







This year the Green Party celebrates its 21st birthday. Now that the party has officially come of age, have the Greens really got what it takes to bring some colour back to British politics?

Shane Collins, a core member of the CoolTan Arts collective and Green Party candidate in the Euro-elections for London South Inner, is one of a new generation of green radicals. Here he talks about a green vision of the future.....

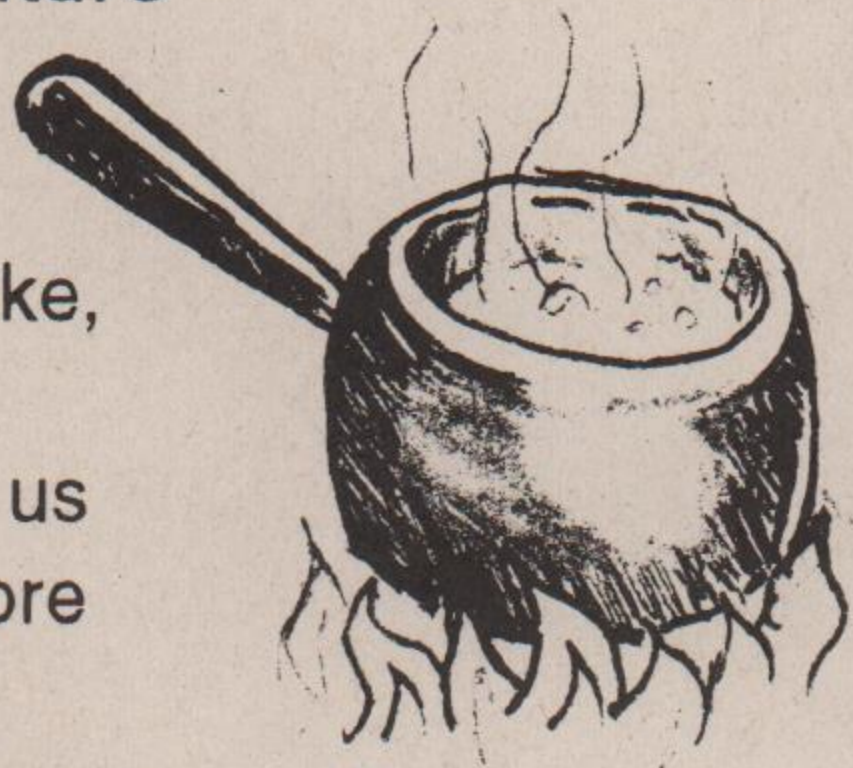
**The Frog story.** If you put a frog in boiling water, it will immediately jump out. But if you put a frog in cold water and gradually heat it, the frog's senses become dulled until it boils to death.

**There is a danger of this happening to us.**

Even in the 1990s, the basic green message still hasn't got through. The way we live now cannot go on forever. We must change or ultimately face extinction. The green debate is rarely expanded by a media that is driven by advertising, three-minute culture and the 'work, consume, die' mentality.

Common sense tells us that the world's resources are limited. If we take, take, take, it's obvious they will run out. But conventional economists and politicians tell us we can continue to produce and consume more and more. Indeed, they judge how well our economy is doing by how fast our resources are used up. It's a crazy situation. Statistically, by the time an 11-year-old child dies, there will be no more natural lead left. Oil will run out much sooner. What are these people thinking about when they read reports that one in seven inner-city kids suffers from car-related asthma? For many of us, it's plain to see that the social imbalance produced by a system based on personal consumption does massive harm to the vast majority of the world's population. For the so-called representatives of our country, politics is economics and nothing more than a series of arguments over who should drive the car faster over the cliff. Then, they cap it all, by saying that we need more economic growth to pay for the environmental damage that is itself caused by a system based on economic growth!

The Green alternative aims to give future

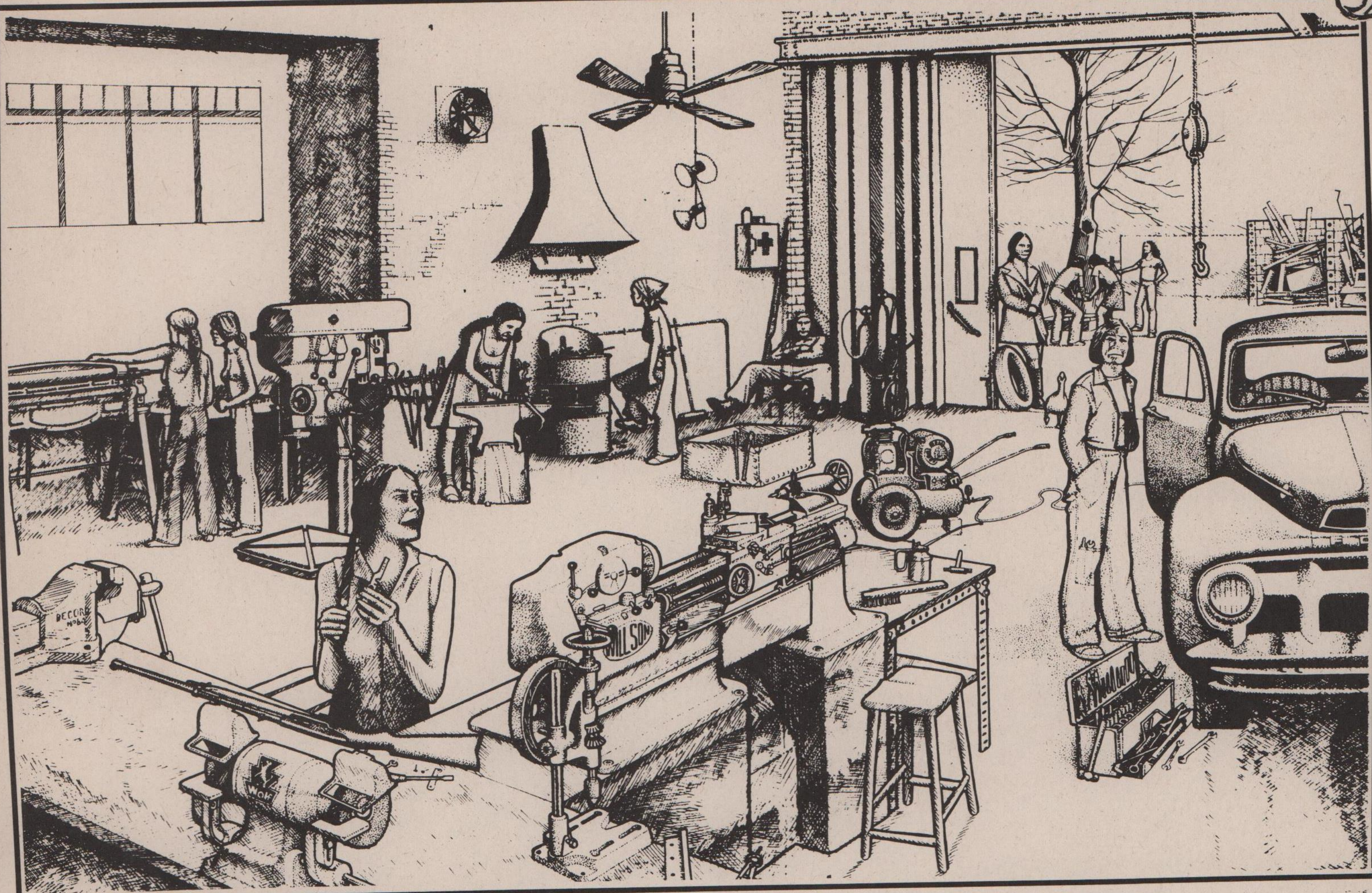


generations a real say in how their communities are run. The key is decentralisation - giving powers and decision-making back to the community, rather than some bureaucrat in Whitehall or Waitrose - living lightly, more in harmony with our planet. It's a simple recognition that the community values of co-operation and sharing are more important than the corporate values of competition and greed. Not much to ask. Common sense expanded really. But how do we get there?

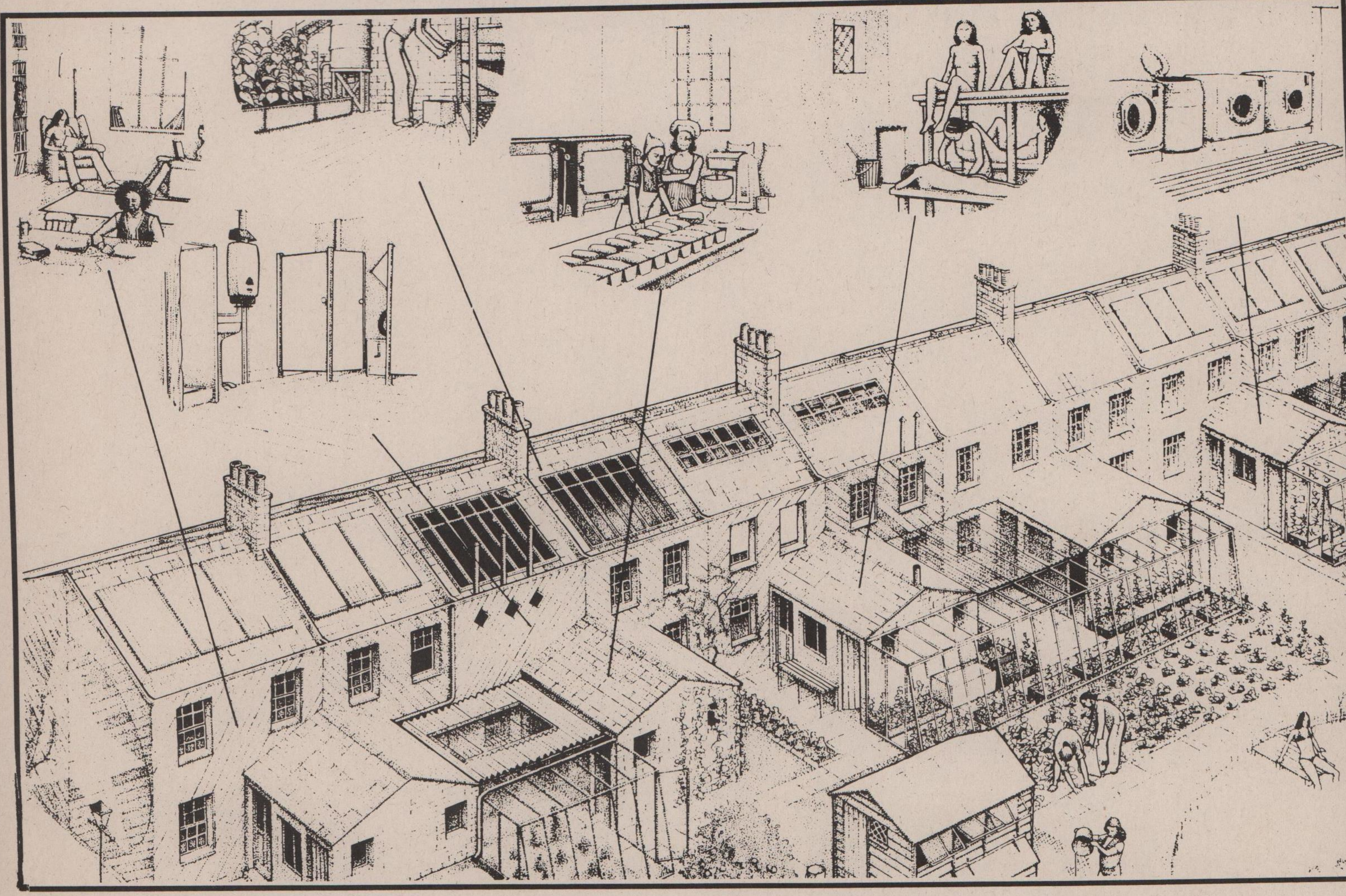
The Green Party aims to be the political wing of the green movement. While there are the ideas and a visionary alternative blueprint for the future (check the manifesto), we don't yet have the natural cultural bedrock of support. Not enough people identify themselves as being green. Much of this is because of the obvious fact we are a young movement and these things take time. Things aren't helped by the fact that we have a first-past-the-post electoral system where most of our cultural base is off the electoral register. We are also proposing a radically different way of life. Natural change takes time.

The Green Party's Energy Conservation Bill was designed to encourage people to make their homes more energy-efficient. It was supported by the Lib Dems but torn apart by the Tories. We have a Bill designed to empower homeless people to use empty buildings and repair and decorate them using advances in their benefit money. But we can't find an MP to sponsor it! We may well get a bit further with the Road Traffic Reduction Bill which has attracted much interest from pressure groups. Perhaps the crux of the matter is that many people are simply scared of change. We have to provide a culture where people naturally identify themselves as green; where green is the easiest, if not the only option. How can the green movement and in particular local green parties play a part in this?



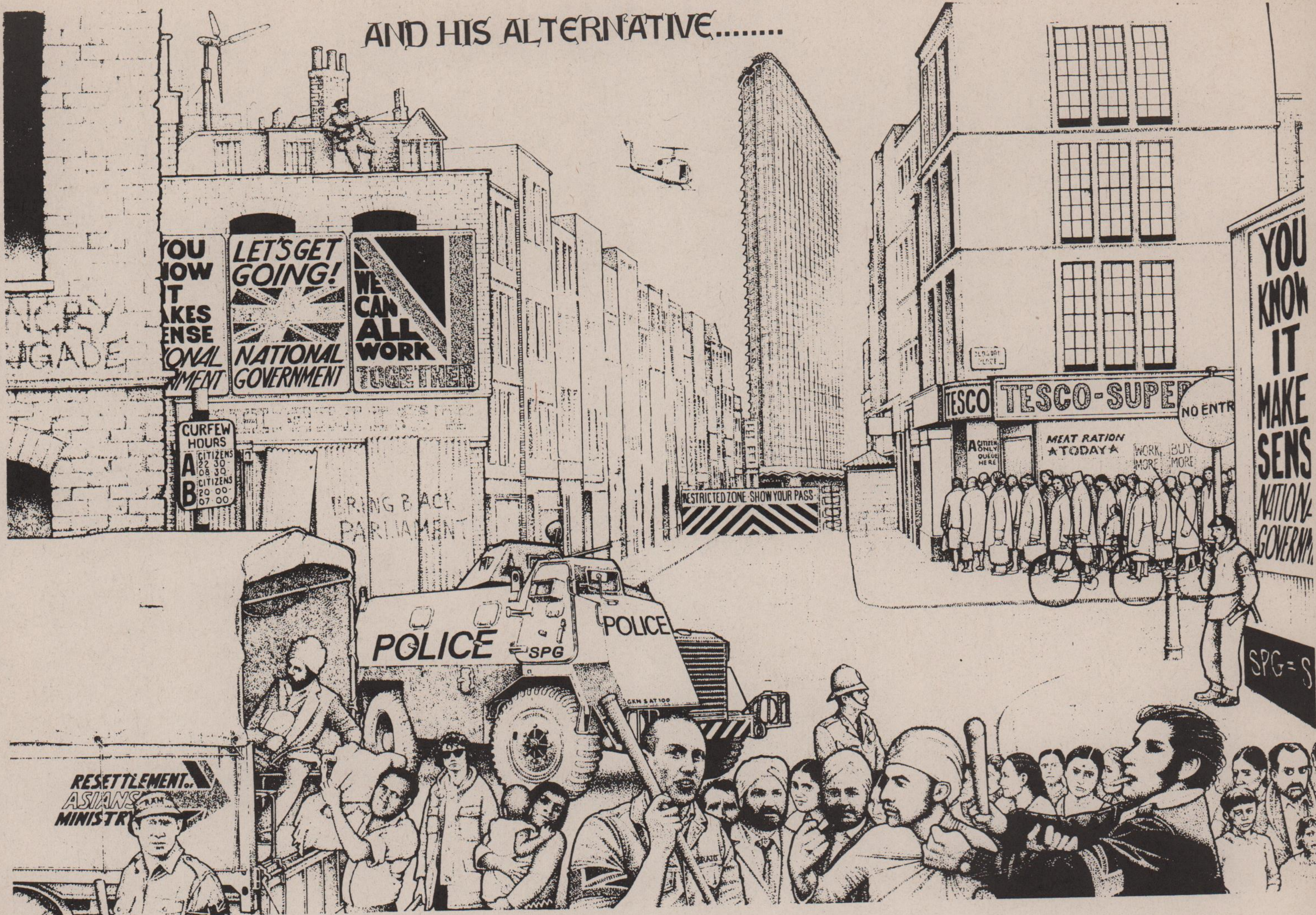


ANARCHIST ARTIST CLIFFORD HARPER'S 70'S VISION OF COMMUNAL LIVING. NOTE (TOP) THAT THE ONLY BLOKE IN THE PICTURE IS ON HIS BUM.





# AND HIS ALTERNATIVE.....



Post Green 2000, the Green Party strategy has opened up. Now greater emphasis is being put on networking with like-minded groups and the political focus is shifting to a social rather than a purely environmental agenda. Peaceful direct action, one of the most important areas of political protest today, will now not just be supported but also acted upon more often. We have recognised that the situation is getting worse, much more quickly than we dared think, and the green movement has to shout louder. This commitment has been seen at the occupation of Artillery Mansions which was funded by different groups in the Green Party and in particular the Green Committee of 100 which was set up to focus on non-violent direct action (NVDA) and carried out with groups such as the Freedom Network, Squatters Action For Secure Homes (SQUASH), the Rainbow Tribe, No M11 Campaign and ex-homeless people. A Green Party action held last year, managed to halt work at the Dungeness Power Station for a day after 30 people D-locked themselves to the gates. While elections do offer avenues of debate and change, it makes sense to favour local elections where we can build on grass-roots support, rather than a first-past-the-post general election. We need a situation where local groups, sound systems, arts groups, will, instead of getting frustrated by their councils, start putting up green or local candidates to become councillors. It may not happen overnight but we only need about 1500 votes in some wards.



I mean, check this: In the last two elections, the Tories won with the same 42% of those who voted. But this percentage actually only represented 32% of the *total* number of voters in this country. Post Poll Tax, a recent study showed that 20% of under 24s are not on the electoral roll which again reduces the number of people the Tories truly represent. In some streets in Brixton, I found that between 30-50% of people weren't on the electoral register. Looking at the figures, it wouldn't be such a surprise if the reality was that more people didn't vote, than voted Tory!

So we have the power. But only if we take it. Green groups have traditionally operated from someone's front room but there is also a need for networking centres that offer both facilities and a friendly, supportive atmosphere to bring people together and kick start a green culture. if you think this is idealistic, think again. A new generation of deep greens are focussing their energies and time into these ideas. DIY arts and community centres are beginning to spring up. Squatted spaces like the Lambeth/London Green Party office at CoolTan Arts and the eco-arts Rainbow Centre in Kentish Town, is one way of doing it, although squatters are just about to be re-pigeonholed as criminals thanks to the Criminal Injustice Bill!

CoolTan has been together since 1991 and in the Old Dolehouse in Brixton since late 1992. We are currently facing the grim prospect of being turfed out because the owners, the Employment Service, have sold the building. Our foothold for keeping food, rehearsal and workshop space the



cheapest in the area, is about to be taken away from us. CoolTan managed to raise a mortgage of £160,000 on the back of a business plan but we were outbid by a business which offered £200,000.

If only the Employment Service had taken on board what CoolTan has achieved. At the moment, a rota system of voluntary housekeepers runs the building and helps keep down overheads. The Community Action Plan (£10/week on top of the dole, no need to sign on, free use of phone, stamps in return for 8hrs work) massages the unemployment figures but can also help build a green culture. The Brixton LETS scheme provides a way of paying people by using community-based goods and services. At present, CoolTan's future is very uncertain but we are always hopeful.

Cheap offices like Earth ARC in Oxford, the M11 campaign office in Leytonstone, the Huddersfield Green Party and Norwich's Greenhouse are other examples of alternative centres which are paid for by donations. Fund-raising and costs are shared by the different groups using the space.

What many of these people have found is that living on the dole isn't much fun if you're on your own. But if you get together with other people, a great deal can be achieved. The actual quality of life for people involved in places such as CoolTan and the Rainbow Centre is terms of food, warmth, friendly people and entertainment is pretty good compared with people who do the conventional 9-5 regime.

These centres can be seen as the new green culture in action. They are the real green shoots of recovery. Whether the catalyst comes from the local green party or grass-roots groups, eco-arts centres like these can help promote a new sense of identity by providing a channel for untapped creative energy.

So where do we go from here? Groups such as Earth First! and the Dongas Tribe have taught us the value of media-based campaigns and the intense personal development that is gained by direct action. Most important of all, we need to shift the agenda again and redefine the meaning of 'green'. We have to take it away from the multinationals who are now selling 'green' as 'consume differently' rather than 'consume less'. We have to remember that we give power away every day.

We vote with our money. Do we give support to a local economy or a multinational economy? This is as important, if not more so, than our election vote. We need this power, we must build strong, green local economies.

Running on a parallel to this is the importance of networking and socialising together. By combining our talents and energies we can produce a far stronger identity than one based on ideology.

The glue that binds these two things together is a peaceful approach. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth will leave us all blind and dumb. Traditionally, the language of the unheard is riot. Of course the Tories know this and would not be upset if a few disturbances broke out which would allow them to position themselves as the party of law and order before the next election.

Our ace card is to remain peaceful - the keep the moral highground. The roads protesters have proved that peaceful direct action wins hearts and minds.

With all this combined, we could be on our way to establishing a green culture which may be the only chance of a real culture for those who come after us. The pressure is on, the momentum is growing. Let us see where it takes us.

Consume Little, Waste Little, Give a lot!



OLD BUMBLE HEAD IS  
- TRYING IT ON AGAIN -  
- 1994 -





**P**ermaculture is one of those things that's hard to explain but pretty easy to put into practice. Here, Pod tries to get

to the roots of the 'blueprint for sustainable living'....

When I first heard of permaculture, I had this image in my head of something from the 'The Good Life' - couples wading through pig manure and coaxing reluctant vegetables to grow in their back gardens. Then I dug a little deeper. Permaculture, it turns out, is actually a design-system which looks at our modern way of life (both urban and rural) and tries to come up with some answers to create a sustainable, non-destructive future. Most people think of permaculture as agriculture-based but it can also be used in a wide range of activities from building, town planning, water supply and purification and commercial or financial systems.

There are both introductory and full design courses on offer for those who want to use permaculture either in their own homes/land or to tie it in with their professions. Certainly, the interest in permaculture has increased considerably during the recession. In the past few years, the number of groups in Britain has mushroomed from three to over 60.

Above all, permaculture offers a blueprint for green living. On an individual level, many of us are already some way along the permaculture road. 'A lot of people, particularly those on the dole, are fed up with being caught up in the system,' explains 28-year-old Amber Skyring, a member of the Permaculture Association. 'If you're looking at ways out of a system that is destructive to the environment and other people, then you're already on the path to Permaculture.'

On a personal level, permaculture can be used to help with a change of lifestyle, for example energy conservation; i.e. draught-proofing, insulation, collecting rainwater, recycling household water and rubbish, buying low energy light bulbs, using a bike instead of a car etc. For those who have the opportunity to grow fruit and veg, permaculture looks at easy ways of growing the maximum amount of food with a minimum amount of effort. Window boxes and tubs can be used to grow an interesting selection of salads, veg and herbs in very small spaces.

According to Steve Read, coordinator of the Permaculture Association office, the amount of derelict and unused land in London alone has increased by 300% since 1975. 'Growing things can be an incredibly rewarding experience,' says 32-year-old Read. 'The great thing about permaculture is that it comes up with all sorts of interesting ways of getting round problems. We say that the problem is the solution. Really, the only limit is your imagination.'

Read started out as an environmental scientist before taking a Diploma in Permaculture Design. 'Basically as a scientist I was just digging up more bad news,' he explains.

'Permaculture seems to be a way of doing something positive.'

Most permaculture gardens and allotments look pretty messy. There is a higgledy-piggledy selection of vegetables, fruit and herbs. No orderly rows or neatly dug furrows. 'The idea behind this is that you keep in the soil's goodness by not digging. On big prairie style farms in East Anglia, you're looking at a top-soil loss of 11 tons per hectare, per year,' Read explains. 'The permaculture idea is to cover the surface with self-seeding plants that will eventually block out weeds. If you do need to plant root vegetables like potatoes you sow the seeds and cover it with straw or some other kind of organic mulch'.

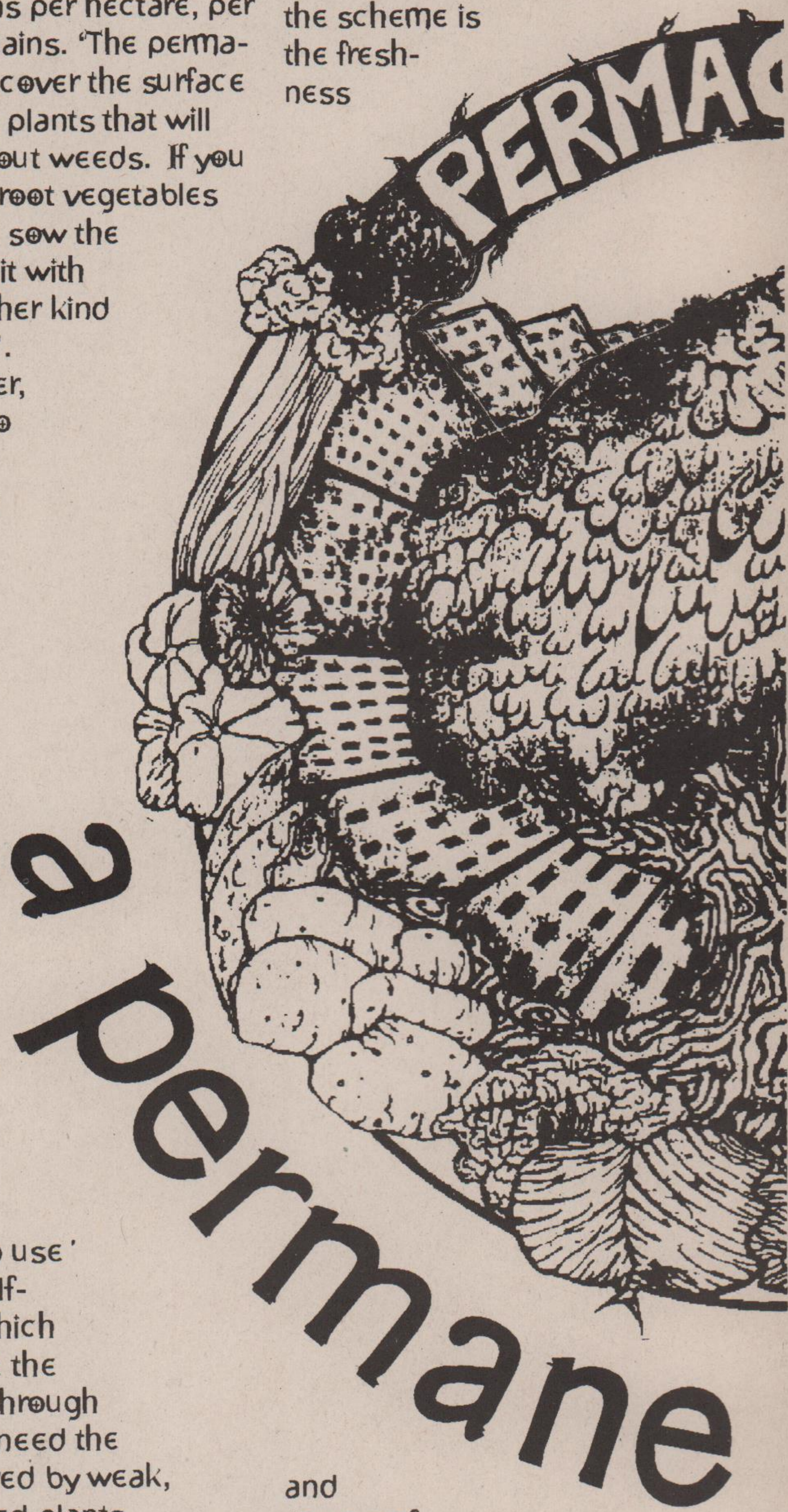
To make life easier, permaculture also has a system of 'zoning' whereby you grow the plants that need most attention nearest to the centre of human activity, i.e. your back-door or garden path. This runs on a parallel with

'Sectors', using plants to help tackle outside elements, for example planting trees as wind breaks. Growers prefer to use perennial and self-seeding plants which will help continue the growing season through winter and don't need the pampering required by weak, specially cultivated plants. Naturally no harmful products are used in the process.

On a wider scale, some permaculturists are looking at ways to introduce a better way of providing food for communities. The South East London Permaculture group was set up by a group of design course graduates two years ago and is busy putting permaculture ideas into action.

Four of its members, including Read, have teamed up with a permaculture landowner in Kent. Brickhurst Farm has 25 acres which

are being turned into an allotment-style permaculture food distribution system. The idea is that the farm will be able to provide up to 150 people in Kent and South-East London with a weekly £5 basket of fresh greens all year round. The scheme looks like it will be on its way to full development by next year. There are also plans to supply organic wine and honey, free range eggs and eventually to produce their own bio-fuel using chicken shit or gas from charcoal. The main attraction to the scheme is the freshness



and flavour of the products. 'One estimate is that each person in this country consumes between 8-10lbs of additives a year,' Read explains. 'This way we're providing cheap food that tastes good and is actually good for you.'

Running alongside this, the South East London Permaculture group has a wholefood distribution system in Brockley, S-E London, which provides 40 people with a monthly supply of fruit and veg



from organic growers, soya milk, organic flour, rice, cornflakes, muesli, bread, cheese etc. Many of the wholefood members are also part of a LETS scheme, which helps to reduce their dependence on Stirling.

'All we've really got to do is change the way we consume,' says Read, summing up the permaculturist's view. 'Every time we shop in an outlet not run and controlled by local people, that money is torn away from the local economy. It leaves the community disempowered and merely a small part of something over which it has no control.'

'Permaculture is coming up with ways to get the community involved in organising their own food supplies,' he

OF THE WAY AND SET UP A SYSTEM THAT WILL EVENTUALLY CAUSE THE UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS TO FADE AWAY. Why build another power station, when you can reduce people's needs? Why build more reservoirs when you can reduce the amount of water people use?'

The ethics behind permaculture are Earth Care, People Care and Fair Shares. 'There is a recognition that every group is different and that we must learn tolerance,' says Read. 'It's important to keep the community alive. If we have any surplus goods or time we invest it in other projects. We're trying to get back to the idea of co-operation and helping each other.'

Permaculture can diversify into different areas. The permaculture view spans a complete cycle from renewable energy using biofuels to treating sewage using reed beds. (Reeds and other water plants apparently have the ability to remove organic matter, disease organisms and even chemical pollutants.)

One of the most successful permaculture groups is in Kingston, Surrey. The Knollmead site has a group of allotments, a pond, forest garden, special work days for its members, a wild flower meadow and willow nursery for basketry. In Gloucestershire, the Stroud Sustainable Village Project is trying to work

between bureaucracy and fundraising to build an entire permaculture village. It's early days, but such fledgling projects are being helped by a growing DIY system which includes ethical banks like Mercury and Provident, self-build housing projects, credit unions and companies such as Radical Routes which helps finance alternative and ecological co-operatives. Amber Skyring has helped to research a study into 'feasible fibres', backed by the Department of the

Environment. Amber, ('I to my parents weren't hippies,' she laughs), used to work as a fashion designer before taking up permaculture. 'I felt all my energies were being swallowed up in an industry that is based on consumerism and is incredibly destructive. Cotton is one of the worst cash crops in the world. It's

grown on just 3% of the world's agricultural land but uses 15% of world pesticides, depletes local water supplies and uses the most fertile land. Now I'm designing my own life and helping other people to design theirs.'

Amber spent two and a half months studying small-scale village industries in India and has come to the conclusion that it would be a step forward rather than a step backwards to encourage similar projects in this country. 'Look at Britain,' she says. 'Almost everything we rely on is imported. We need to start up small, community-based schemes that will make us more self-sufficient. It's something that really cannot be imposed on us from above. Community schemes need to grow up from the desires of the communities themselves.'

She points out that approximately 1500 acres of hemp was grown in Britain last year much of which was used to make wood-free paper.

So do permaculturists have the answer to a greener future or are they living in an idealistic fantasy land? Certainly, Brickhurst Farm is taking longer to set up and is a lot harder work than was originally supposed. They have had to content with considerable opposition from the local parish and county councils but are battling on. There has also been a bit of criticism levelled at the South East London Permaculture group. Some say now that the group has a core membership, they're not working hard enough to bring in the outside community. Amber replies to this by saying, 'Sometimes it's very hard work to get people motivated. Once people have become disempowered, it's very difficult to get them to take responsibility. We aren't going to tell anyone what to do. We have to wait for them to want to do it and then we'll encourage them all the way.'

#### THE BANANA SAGA - JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW WE'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG.

In the West we demand bright yellow, blemish free bananas. Costa Rica has the most intensive production of bananas in the world. To maintain this and to meet the standards we demand, plantation workers spray 20 kilos of pesticides per hectare per year. This is ten times the level usually used on any crop. As a result, Dr Catherine Wesseling has estimated that 100 plantation workers die and 10,000 are poisoned, per year all so that our bananas are yellow.

#### GREEN DISASTER IN RUSSIA

Russia's environment minister has admitted that about 15% of Russia can be considered an environmental disaster zone. Some 100,000 people live on land where radiation levels are too high. Half of Russia's 550 million acres of arable land is unsuitable for farming and only one fifth of industrial waste is adequately treated. Past nuclear tests and accidents have polluted hundreds of rivers and vast areas of land. Environmental safety has been neglected in favour of rapid industrialisation. And that's only what they're prepared to admit to!

FOR MORE DETAILS SEND A STAMPED, ADDRESSED ENVELOPE TO THE PERMACULTURE ASSOCIATION, PO BOX 1 BUCKFASTLEIGH, DEVON, TQ10 0LH. TEL: (0892) 825049.

USEFUL READING; Permaculture in a Nutshell by Patrick Whitefield, Urban Permaculture by David Watkins and The permaculture Garden by Graham Bell, all available from Permanent Publications, Hyden House Limited, Little Hyden Land, Clanfield, HANTS PO8 0RU. Tel: (0705) 596500.



continues. 'But we don't talk about it as a revolutionary thing. By design, you can introduce a period of accelerated evolution. One of permaculture's axioms is local production for local needs. We'd like to see thousands of small communities setting themselves up like this.'

Read says he follows the front-line eco-campaigners with interest. He himself used to be into non-violent direct action as a hunt saboteur. 'WHAT I FOUND IS THAT THERE'S ANOTHER APPROACH TO MEETING FORCE WITH FORCE,' HE EXPLAINS. 'YOU CAN JUST STEP OUT



In the red ?? Feeling blue

BETTER THAN BARTER : LETS

# BRICK BY BRICK

If you're tired of being ripped off or having to pay through the nose for crap services, you'll be pleased to know there is another way. L.E.T.S (Local Employment and Trading Scheme) is a simple system which enables people to trade locally, meet new people, and promote useful and environmentally friendly activity.....all without the use of money!

LETS works through a directory, a bit like a yellow pages, which lists the skills, services and goods that members want to offer or would like to use. These can either be very practical, total luxuries or things not normally available in the 'real' world. Trades are negotiated using the local currency (in the case of Brixton, it's 'Bricks'). Say, for example you want your video repaired, you negotiate with the repairer to pay them a certain number of 'Bricks'. These 'Bricks' are then debited from your account and added to the repairer's. The transaction is then recorded in the central accounts and the repairer can then use those 'Bricks' for a totally different trade with someone else in the scheme. Simple really!

There are now over 200 schemes around the country. The idea of an alternative economy is a proven reality which really works. So if you've got a bike you keep meaning to sell, or you need child-care, a massage, a computer expert, a second-hand camera, or your cat feeding while you're away: join a LETS Scheme!

## THE ARTIST

When I first heard of the Brixton LETS scheme I was intrigued and excited by the possibilities of a trade system using an alternative currency. Attractive, but difficult to accept, was the lack of stigma in going into deficit and better still the lack of a bank manager needing to be convinced of my credit worthiness. As a penniless artist with a history of less than harmonious relations with my bank manager, this was good news....

I have used the LETS scheme a lot to obtain models for both life drawing and for portrait sitting. This has been brilliant as most of the people I want to paint tend to be as broke as I am, so wouldn't have the money to commission a portrait. Instead I can pay them an hourly rate in Bricks to sit for me. Among the many benefits I have obtained through the scheme are weekly tuition in bongo playing, an electric typewriter for fifty bricks, meals half paid for in Bricks from the COOLTAN cafe (which opened an account in the early days of the scheme) and furniture removals from several members of the LETS scheme with vans.

Services I have given have included land clearance, painting a portrait and embroidering a friend's dress. Importantly, belonging to a LETS scheme has contributed to my feeling a greater sense of belonging to a community. It is a healthy step towards linking people with exchangeable skills and away from the sense of alienation that so often can be felt living in a city. It is a personalised economy where people to continue to exchange services and skills even in a depressed and outdated economic system

## THE MASSEUR

It's not that I'm lazy or lacking in motivation, its just that for me to find work palatable, there are a number of criteria to be met. I need to exercise control over when I work, how I work, how long I work and how much I receive for my work and to have some diversity in my work. That's why twelve months ago I bowed out of the routine, 9 to 5, Thames, Link commuting, forelock-tugging rat race to take up work as a masseur-cum-cleaner-cum-house painter-cum-artists model, chef and carpenter to name but a few of the ways in which I have been able to earn my "Bricks" in the LETS scheme.

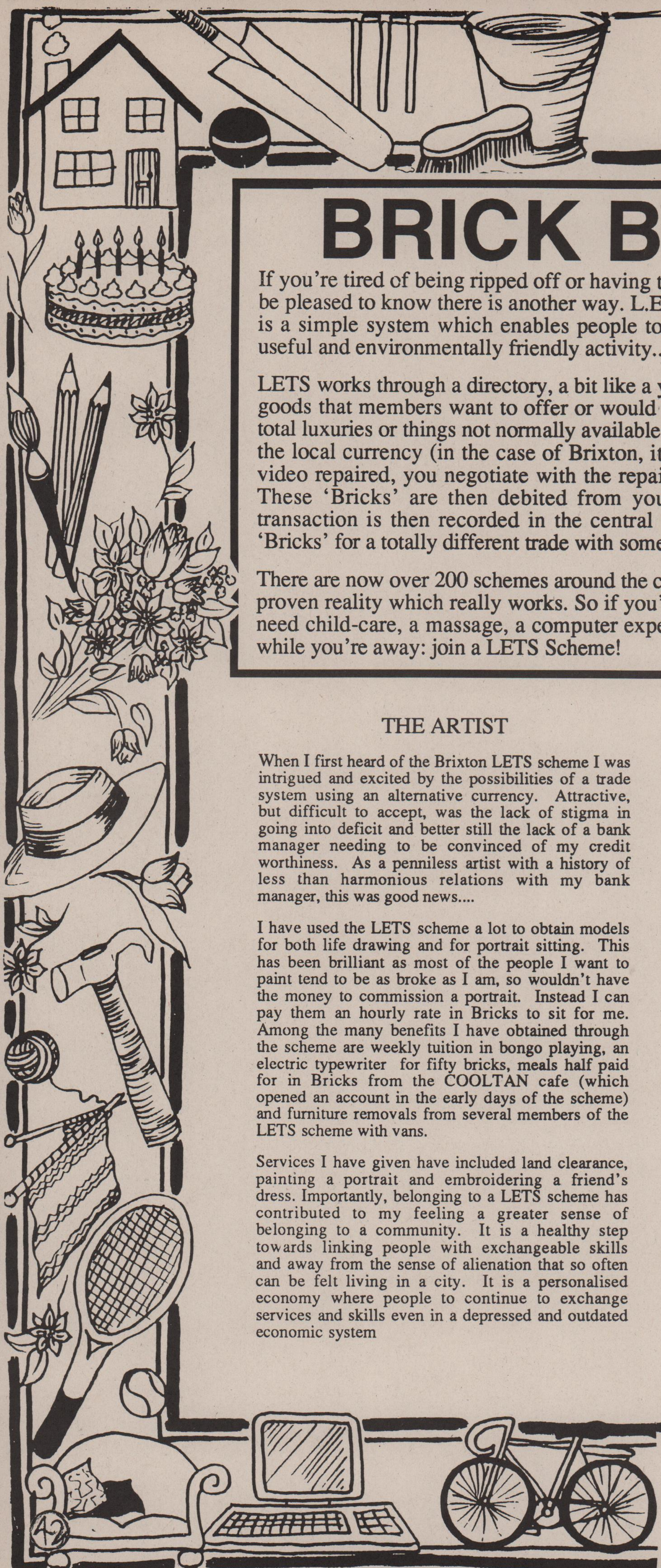
In return I have bought furniture for my house, had clothes made or altered, had TV programmes videoed, had my sofa covered, letters typed and my bike repaired.

If variety is the spice of life, the scheme has permitted me to partake in a veritable vindaloo of work options, but more than this, as a foreigner who arrived in this country five years ago, being involved in a community based scheme like this has been important in finally allowing me to make contacts with local people and to feel a sense of rootedness that is so difficult to find in the alienating anonymity of London.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the scheme is that for the first time in my life I've escaped petit bourgeois guilt about over-spending since, in a small closed economic community, I know that my spending is adding to the overall wealth of everyone and as hoarding "Bricks" is pointless, this wealth must eventually return to me.

Of course, as yet, the scheme isn't perfect. I still need £, shilling and pence to buy my fruit and veg but as the membership grows more and more, basic needs are being met while my own personal need for freedom and variety most certainly has been. I may never work for "The Man" again!

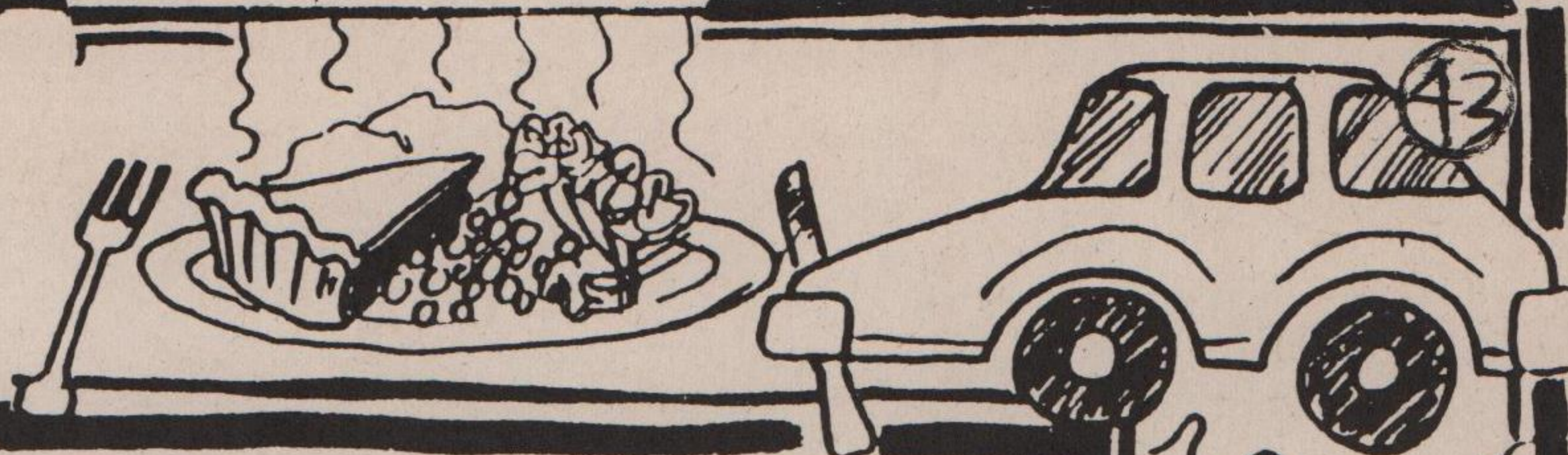
FOR MORE INFORMATION :





# ?? Join the GREEN economy !!

SCHEMES : A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE



## THE ACTOR

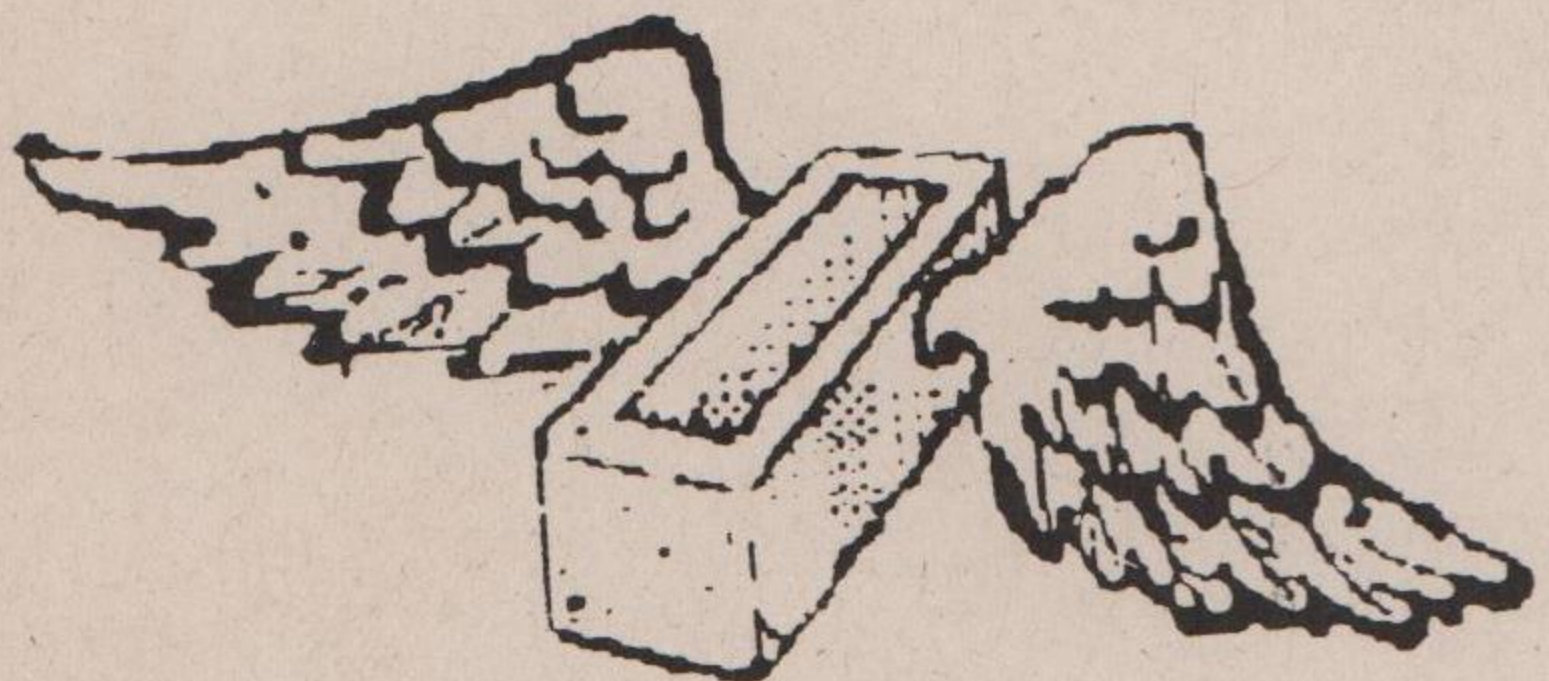
I was very attracted to the concept and the philosophy behind LETS. It seemed one way of contributing to a healthier, less materialistic world. And on a practical level, being an actor, I often have periods of unemployment, when I welcome having use made of my many alternative skills.

I was fortunate in having a scheme just starting on my doorstep, in Brixton, and have seen its membership really flourish in its first year. There is a very wide range skills now on offer and I've been fortunate to benefit from several new CVs, carpentry, electrical work and massage not to mention introduction to like minded people who are concerned to leave the world a better place.

I've been able to offer stilt walking, bread making, Italian translation, lifts in my car, videoing and cleaning.

One problem I have encountered is that members seem keener to join and less committed to informing the directory for up-dating when they leave the area or withdraw offers.

It does take some courage to phone around and negotiate in a new currency, not dissimilar from putting yourself on the line for an audition!



## THE COUNSELLOR

I find that there are "thing" people and there are "people" people. I'm a "people" person and I joined LETS to get to mix with as many local "people" people as I could.

"People" people accept me as I am. They give me space. They don't presume; I feel free in their company. I often receive ideas and suggestions I'd never have thought of from these "people" people. In fact, when I'm in their company there's some sort of creative juice that starts flowing and I find myself offering suggestions I had never thought of before.

So that's another thing about LETS people; they're stimulated by the potential of human existence and human contact - that is my experience. And the fact that the membership remains too large to get to know everyone means that I am always a new boy to someone, an absolute beginner.

I've done counselling, ground breaking, some rather brilliant skip salvage and I've received massage and been to a party with probably the best veg food in London. Come on over to where its really at man, Brixton LETS!

- OFFER Glazing, plastering, odd jobs
- OFFER Spanish cookery
- OFFER Financial counseling
- OFFER Tailoring, Sewing, patternmaking, upholstery, re-upholstery, loose covers, alterations and repairs
- OFFER Bricklaying
- OFFER Wildlife gardening, Designs for small gardens.
- OFFER Gardening lessons in your own garden.
- OFFER Esoteric and off-the-wall solutions
- OFFER Loan of lawn mower
- OFFER Loan of pushbike
- OFFER Pet sitting / minding / feeding / walking
- OFFER Baby sitting(plenty of children and grandchildren experience!)
- OFFER Handpainted mirrors, handmade cards, jewellery, sculpture

- WANT Metal fire escape stairs
- WANT Wetsuit to fit slim 6ft male
- WANT Plumbing in of coal burning stove
- WANT baking trays
- WANT Second hand straight handlebars, mudguards, back carrier or basket, Bike lights and D-lock
- WANT Washing machine
- WANT entertainers, musicians, jugglers, magicians, etc
- WANT Repointing of brickwork
- WANT Broken crockery
- WANT advice on portfolio for Art courses
- WANT Motorcycle engine mechanics

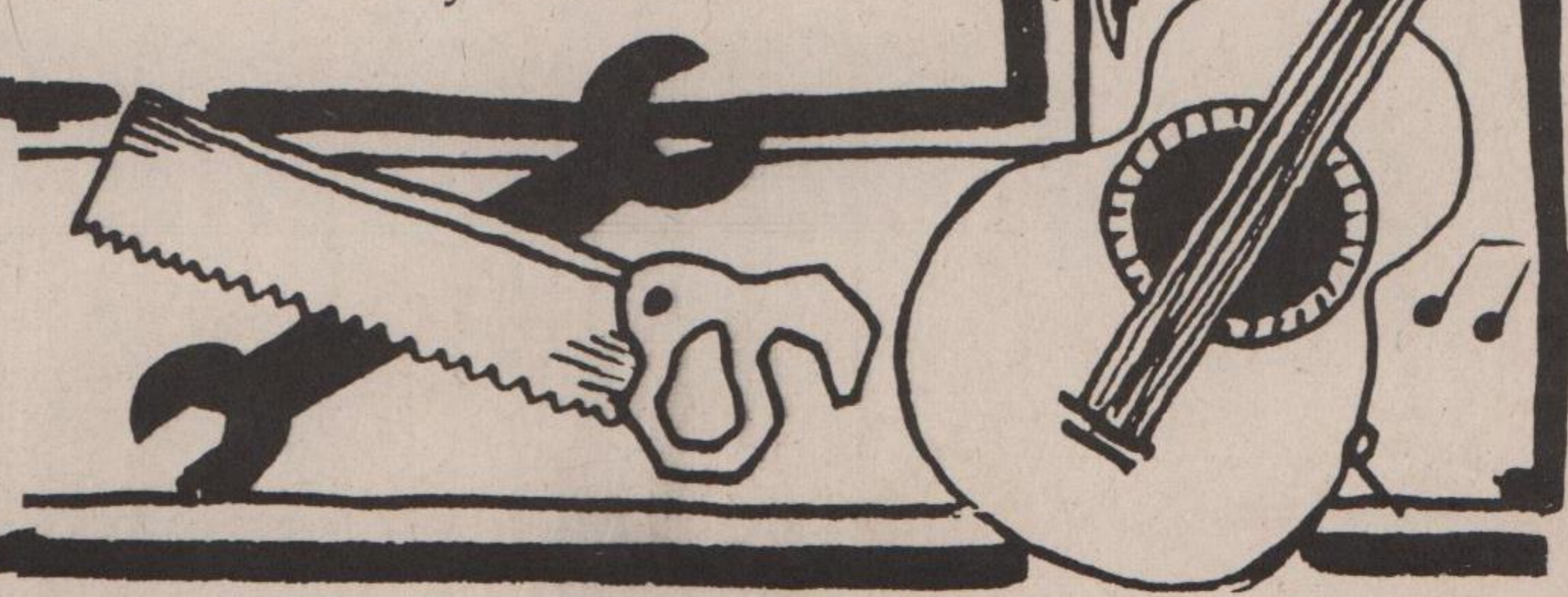
## THE MILLINER

I don't think I've ever had enough disposable cash income in my life to spend on the goodies that I can afford on the LETS scheme...

I've been rubbed up and down by various aromatic hands; I've had my bike mended and my sandwiches made; I've acquired a wide selection of gorgeous, crafty gifts from a wide selection of gorgeous, arty people; I've had last minute access to smart computers and next week I'll be setting all of the LETS driving instructors the 'Teach Paula To Drive' Challenge.... all for bricks!

My advice whether you're on the dole or not, is to get a LETS scheme going in your area. Life on LETS is a hell of a lot more comfortable, sociable and rewarding than life in that cash madhouse out there!!

L.E.T.S. artist : Rachel Jennings  
Design and words - Polly Griffiths



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!





# LETTER FROM BEIJING



This year is the fifth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations. China is fast developing as an economic and industrial superpower but what about its people? Karen Smith reports on how art is reflecting the changes in China's capital.

Can you picture a city that is physically being razed to the ground to make way for a brave new world? Welcome to Beijing. The Middle Kingdom is a turbulent sea of change. Construction cuts broad welts across the city surface. Bicycles, taxis and people weave through like inhabitants of a war zone. All is tolerated for the possibilities change will bring.

There's no certainty about the future but many people have dreams. With all the economic confusion facing the West, eager entrepreneurs and multinationals are diving into Eastern waters in the hope of being washed up solvent and successful.

The big question is, who's gaining? It might just be that the rest of the world counts the cost as the ozone layer evaporates above congratulatory back-slapping over the completion of the next five-year plan ahead of time or for receiving record levels of foreign investment.

If I sound cynical, there's good reason. What I'm seeing is culture being sacrificed in the name of money, on the altar of blind self-interest. Yes, China needs change, the people should be given the opportunity to lift themselves above the harsh conditions of stone-age living. But China's pseudo-Socialism is Socialism no more.

New China is definitely exciting. It's a modern hybrid of East meets West. There are McDonalds, Baskin Robbins, salons and restaurants - there's not much you can't get in Beijing these days. At the same time, the Yin-Yang concept of balance in all things is way out of whack with little hope of reconciliation. Does it matter? Not here, not now.

You only have to take a walk down Wanfujing, Beijing's Oxford Street, and you'll see consumerism in its element. Four years ago, even two, the bulk of the Chinese population had a two-tone wardrobe: dust-grey khaki or chalky cobalt blue. The tones linger on the fringes but today, new trends offer leeway for self-expression never before witnessed on such a broad scale. The new wealth gives expression to people right across society. With the pressure of political dogma off, art and music flourish. Modernity no longer feared as a veiled threat to stability, punishable without explanation or rationale. That's not to say that artists still don't find the plug pulled on their exhibitions and performances without warning or reason. Last year, was the year of the club. The government's policy of encouraging the vast numbers that have been made inactive by factory streamlining and new technology to start up their own private enterprise has opened up new chances. A few forward thinking individuals are cashing in on the growing numbers of young, more affluent people looking for a good time. For many, this means McDonalds, KFC, the endless walls of glass and glitz, bright lights and karaoke. But alternative dance and music spaces are popping up to cater for the contingent of dreads, wispy beards, shaven skulls and the Reebok brigade. Cigarettes and outward angst are de rigueur. It's 1980s London all over again!

A tourist 'must' is Yuan Ming Yuan, an artists' village in the north-west of the city. The commune has been running for over ten years and now has around 40

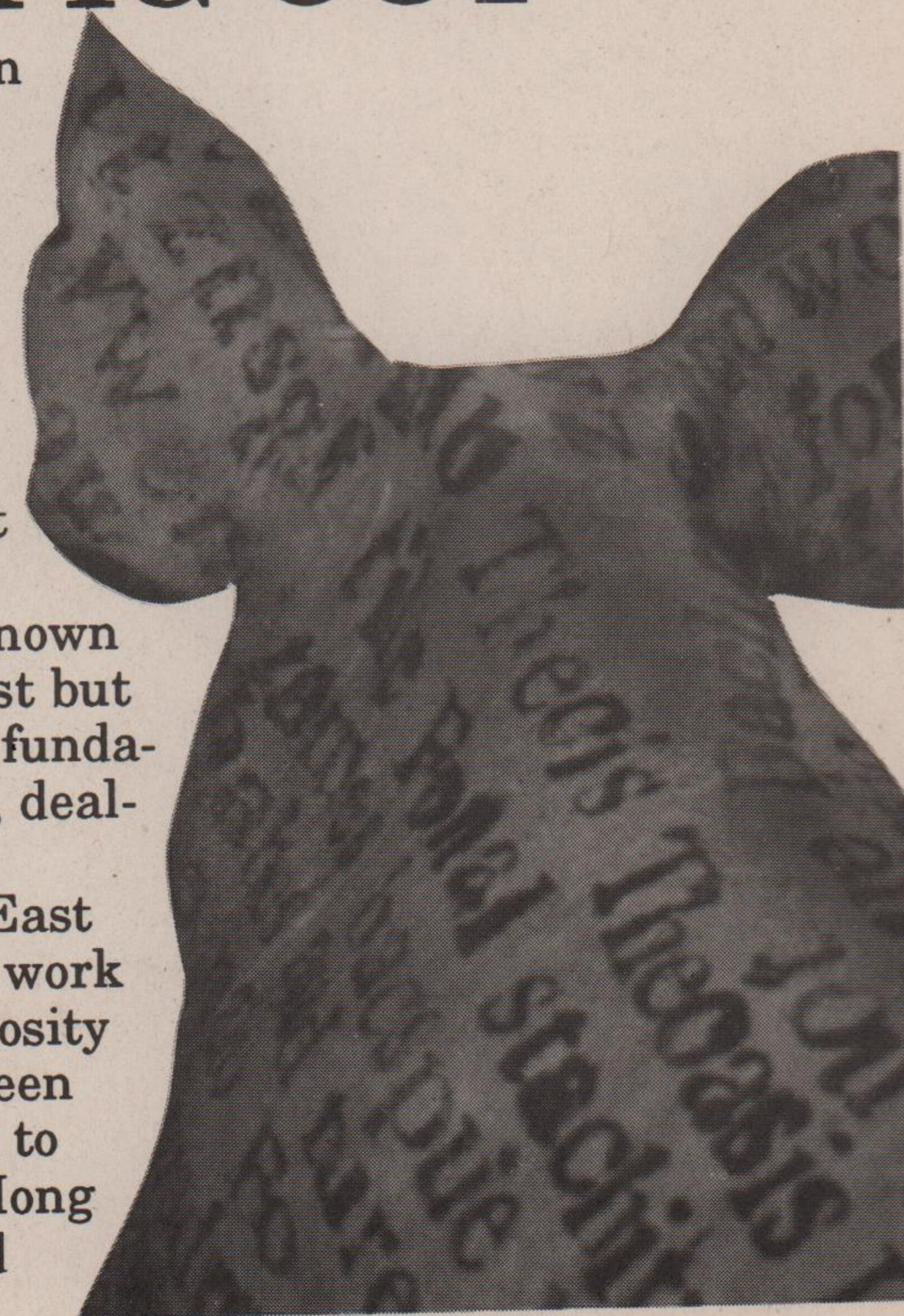
practising artists who find compensation for living in their run-down environment through the high prices paid by foreign dealers and art-lovers. Artists who once dreamed of escaping the the West are now content to stay. For them, change brings inspiration, a comfortable life, a 24-hour-a-day artistic option to be part of a movement that they can see, feel and touch. Too many have heard horror stories from non-English speaking emigres trying to live in a world where iron rice bowls just don't exist.

I'm witnessing a new, smarter generation, one that will no doubt spawn a dangerous divide. Beijing is a land of extremes. I sit in a teacher's house, twice the size of any I've seen before. She proudly shows me results of her interior designer (a novel concept in China). 'Nouveau decadence, a tacky veneer. I listen to her complain about the state of her neighbours' place. The Jones's have arrived.

Will they learn anything from the errors of the West? There are very few signs that Westerners have, so why should they? My perspective here, sees a society changing, mutating faster than HIV. The comparison is not to be underestimated. One thing you can be sure of, anyone who questions China's direction or calls for the rights of the people to be given priority will be dealt with far more severely than their western counterparts. China's contemporary art shows what is now 'permitted' against what has been banned before. This is most apparent in China's Pop Art movement which came about in the early 1990s. It's characterised by a psychedelic flowering of Mao images across canvases in bright colour. The beaming Mao with hand raised against a background of flowers appears much more in line with the peace and love motifs of the sixties than the bleak communist call to arms that it was adopted for.

## PIG OUT

It would have been wild wherever it had been staged - the fact that it took place in Beijing gives it a unique and dynamic edge. Beijing-born artist Xu Bing, 36, is fast becoming a known international artist but his work remains fundamentally Chinese, dealing with issues of communication - East versus West. His work has provoked curiosity wherever it has been show, from China to Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Europe and Australia.





His art derives from 'building blocks of language' which he reconstructs and rebuilds with great irony.

In his work, you can see the history of China, destroyed and reconstructed by an ignorant and opportunistic hand. He sees language as a tool of communication that both defines and divides people.

His latest exhibition, *Rape or Natural Love* took place in a factory unit in Wanfujing. There I was in a room with sixty curious onlookers crowding round the side of a none too sturdy iron fence and looking at a scattered selection of books on the floor.

**Snuffling around in the middle was a none too happy pig. Painted onto the pig were lines of beautifully formed letters printed over its entire body in rich black ink.**

Snorting at the flashing camera, the pig trotted clumsily over the piles of books apparently looking for food. Snapping its jaws at pages that fluttered as it passed, the pig then spat out chewed bits of paper, showing its irreverence to the written word as either reading matter or food - an irony in a society that has systematically destroyed its written culture as being bourgeois and capitalist, where knowledge is elitists and strictly controlled.

Eventually, the pig retreated into a corner and lay down. The crowd remained untouched by such 'politically correct' western ideas as animal rights. Then, from the far back corner of the room, a section of the iron cordon slid back and a hefty sow lurched into the arena. Scrubbed equally pink, her body was an elegant coat of printed Chinese characters.

**The first pig immediately launched himself onto the female in a frenzy of lust. The sow sporadically squealed, not so much in pain as in indignation.** The male, intent on having his way with the sow, was oblivious to the crowd. The female seemed acutely aware of the eyes watching her and refused to yield easily. The room suddenly seemed very small and the pigs very close. Through the sheen of black ink, the sow's back was turning red with the rubbing of the male against her skin and in places, thin lines of scarlet blood appeared.

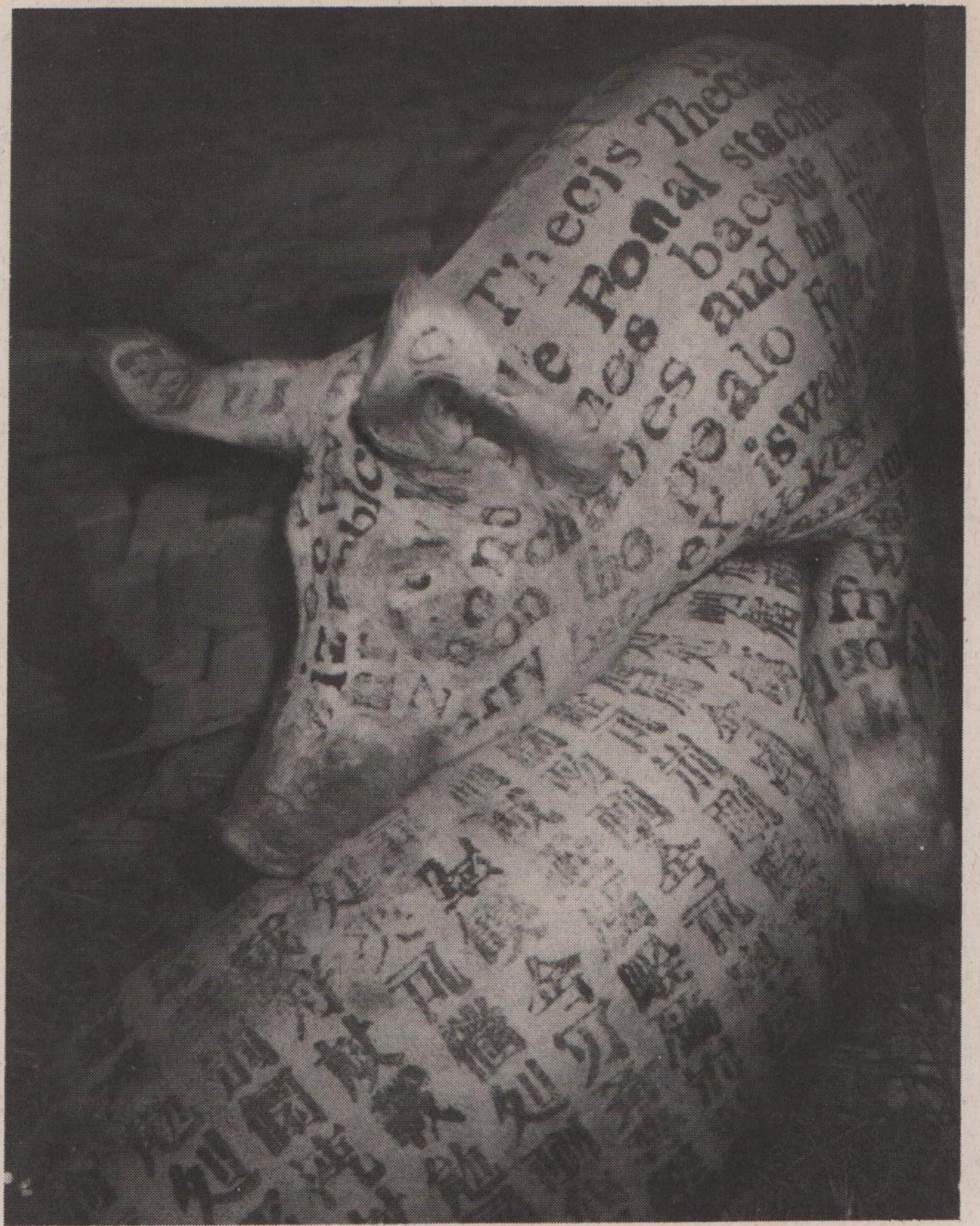
**The male's eyes shone like beads of jet, his sharp mouth seemed cut in an inane grin. Climax achieved, the male was cornered and led out.**

What had we witnessed? The art of reproduction at its most instinctive or two pigs fucking? Chinese characters on the sow,



Roman letters on the male; the meeting or the clash of East and West? The Chinese characters were an nonsensical as the fine script of the alphabet. Was the message the senselessness of

communication? Or was it an allusion to China being fucked over by the West?

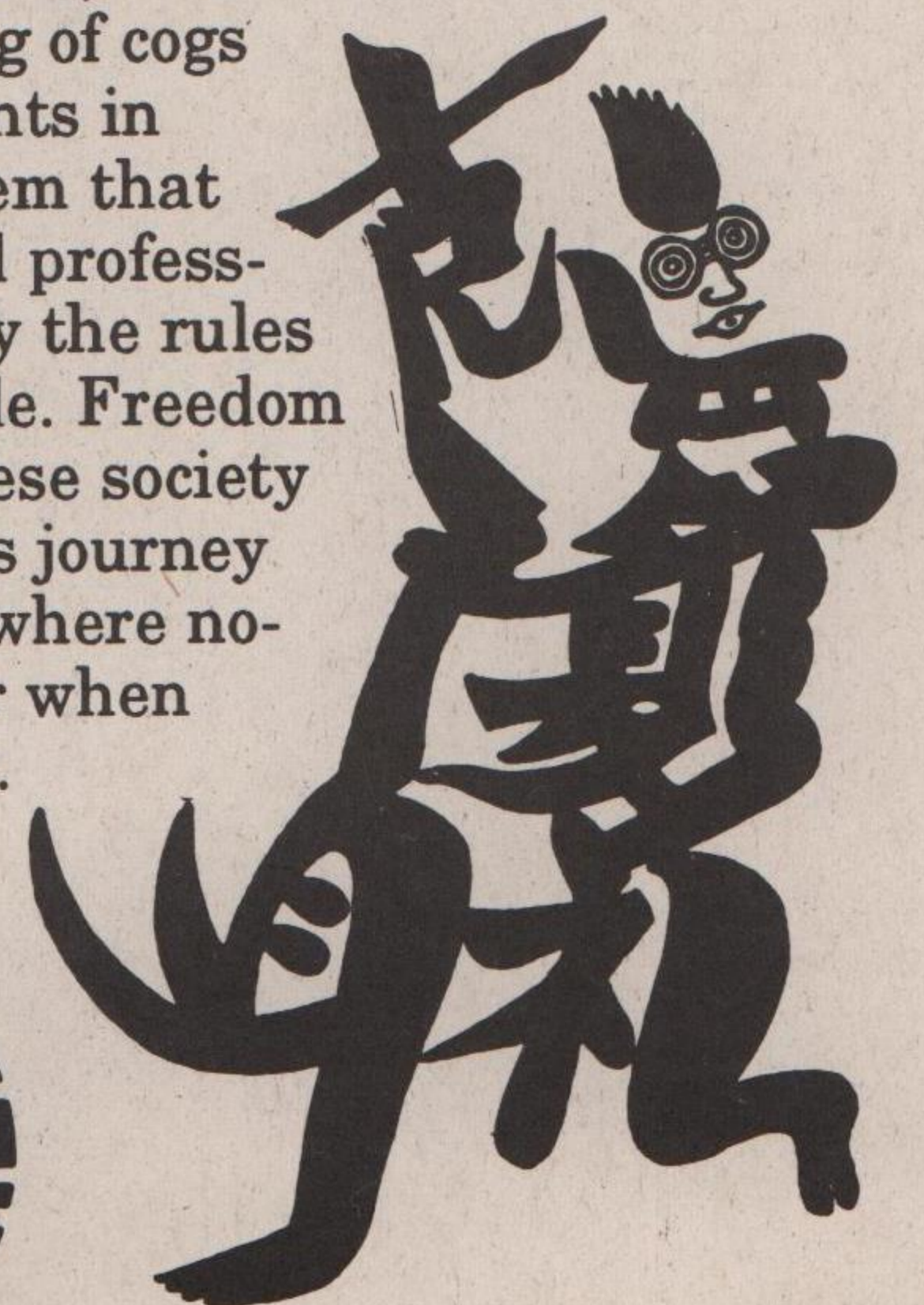


## WAS IT ART?

The event was greeted with quiet smiles and noncommittal answers. Was it art? That was not really the question people were asking. What circumstances had permitted this in Beijing? Chinese people are often not as keen to seek symbols in everything as Westerners are, yet art and metaphor are almost synonymous in Chinese history. Xu Bing, is now based in the USA, perhaps his international reputation allowed him more privilege.

## In Beijing, exhibitions have been closed for far less sensational images on canvas.

This touches on another aspect of the complexities of life in modern China, the connections and procedures, the oiling of cogs necessary to set events in motion. It is a system that calls all people in all professions to order; play by the rules or fall by the wayside. Freedom in all areas of Chinese society appears a precarious journey across a frozen lake where no-one knows where or when the ice will give way.







# THE RACHEL RANTER

## COLUMN

### LOST THE PLOT?

Isn't it amazing that only a handful of top Tories like Jeffrey Archer and Edwina Currie have cashed in on their talents for inventing fiction. After all, fiction writers tell the story just the way they want it and isn't that what the Government does best?

We all know how busy Home Secretary Michael Howard has been with his 1990s version of 'Crime and Punishment'. Unfortunately, the research isn't turning out quite the way he'd like it. But that shouldn't get in the way of a good storyline. After all, he wants a best seller.

I expect he'll be ignoring that leaked Home Office paper which finally admitted the link between crime and unemployment. 'It's silly to deny it,' a Department spokesman told the Daily Mirror. But of course, Mr Howard knows better. 'We should have no truck with trendy theories that try to explain away crime by blaming socio-economic factors,' he says with that annoyingly smug expression.

And he's not the only one who thinks so. 'The bulk of thieving, of course, has nothing to do with poverty,' said Employment Secretary David Hunt. And he should know of course, with his vast experience of life on the bread line in 1990s Britain. (Or do you suppose that the thieving he's referring to happens in the City by men in suits? In which case, I'm sorry David, I quite agree.)

No, no. As anyone who likes a bloody good pot boiler will tell you, you've got to have a baddie - a proper baddie - not just some poor bugger who's got no hope and no future because the school system's falling apart and there are no jobs. Take J.R. Ewing for instance, he was a baddie. Or the Daleks - they were really bad.

But then.... there was that research from Cambridge University which revealed that the number of burglaries goes up by 0.4% every time unemployment rises by 1%. Bit of a tricky storyline that one. Still, I don't expect Mr Howard will let it worry him. He'll probably just stick to a black and white plot and promise to chuck the baddies in prison for ever and ever.

It's easier that way. People can understand it without thinking. It's meant to be a best seller after all, not bloody Dostoevsky.

### TUNNEL VISION

Travelling by tube in London is getting weirder every year. We're beginning to see the face of London Underground at last and it's a sort of desperate, blustering, businessman who's relying on the advertising wide boys to get him out of trouble.

First there was that sinister poster campaign against fare dodging which showed a hand clutching the arm rest so tensely that the veins stand out. 'THINK WHAT YOU SAVE WHEN YOU BUY A TICKET,' was the caption. I'm sorry but life just wouldn't be worth living if we were that scared of London Underground. Then we're told that if we're caught fare-dodging, everyone will look at us accusingly. Foreigners must think we're really strange; The only nation which could be embarrassed out of fare-hopping.

### BIN THERE, DONE THAT.

I've notice that everyone these days is either out of work or working their arses off. Most companies have got rid of so much so-called 'dead wood' that most people with jobs are in danger of having nervous breakdowns.

When I visited a friend the other day, I noticed how much litter there was blowing around the communal gardens outside the flat. 'It's been like that ever since the bin men went private,' he explained. 'They come down here in a team - they have to run because they're in such a rush to fill their quotas.'

'One bloke takes all the lids off the bins and chucks them on the ground, another runs by with a big bin on his back and a third empties all the rubbish into it. Then they all run off again and we go out and put the lids back on. They don't have time to pick up the bits they spill.' God knows what'll happen when the privatize the nuclear industry.

### AND MORE...

Sorry but I've just got to get another transport gripe off my chest. What about these inspectors who dish out ten quid penalty tickets if you haven't got a ticket. So, if you're in a hurry, and you've got to queue for a ticket, basically, you're stuffed. It's about as customer-friendly as the Poll Tax.

London Underground claims it loses £30 million a year in dodged fares. How did they work that one out? Did they poll the dodgers? Or did they ask a section of the public to confess to how often they travelled without a ticket?

And how much is this poster campaign costing anyway? The latest poster asks: 'Do you want someone else travelling for free while you pay? We thought not.' Frankly, other things upset me more....like the team of jobsworth inspectors at my local station or being stranded in a tunnel because something's not working.

London Underground tell us that if there were no fare dodgers, they'd have enough money and none of this would happen. Yeah, yeah, yeah... Just like if there were no dole-fiddlers, taxes would go down and if there were no single mums, there'd be no crime.... Meanwhile, we've got the the most expensive underground system in Europe - and probably the most stressful.

### STRANGE BUT TRUE

A snippet in one of the Sunday tabloids informed us that the lawyer representing 'House Of Horror' builder Fred West has confirmed that he is gay, (the lawyer, that is.) Bizarre! Perhaps as the West murder mystery unfolds, these journalists will dig even deeper and tell us how many shirts he's got or what the poor man eats for breakfast.

### BANG 'EM UP!

Talking about punishment....I may be mistaken but I thought society was supposed to become more enlightened as time went on. I'm sure I read that somewhere.

Shouldn't we be looking for the most humane, progressive and cost-effective ways of dealing with lawbreakers, rather than simply beating them into submission? Judging by the collective media 'outrage' over the treatment of offenders recently, the answer is no.

Take that bloke who battered his baby daughter to death. It was a terrible thing to do and something we really shouldn't judge unless we were in court and heard all the facts. What we do know is that he did it because he couldn't control his anger, so he was sent on an anger management course.

Sounds logical to me. But no - howls of fury from the Press. He should have been thrown in prison as a punishment. But how can you punish behaviour like that? You can't. No punishment could ever fit that kind of crime. It's primitive and brutish to suggest it could. He'd probably come out of prison just the same and do it again, or something like it, except that after years in the prison system, he'd probably be even more angry.

Then there's Bryn Melyn Remand Centre in Wales. The tabloids are obsessed with young offenders being sent sailing or rock climbing or doing anything else which teaches them something about achievement, the occasional need for discipline, teamwork and thinking before you act. In other words, things which say that there is something more to life than being a casualty of Tory Britain.

It's a waste of time, we're told. Never mind that it has a high success rate, never mind that it costs less than bugging them in jail. No - just lock these kids up and throw away the key.

Well, how daft can you get. Just what will that teach them? It's all right as long as you don't get caught? I can't see any other lesson, except perhaps that you're a waste of space and we've chucked you in the trash can of society.

Of course punishment isn't the answer. Since the Home Secretary made the theory that 'prison works' a cornerstone of his law and order strategy, the prison population has risen by nearly 8,000 to a near record level of 48,800.

I could hardly believe my eyes when I read what rent-a-mouth Tory MP Geoffrey Dickens had to say: 'These youngsters who have repeatedly inflicted misery on their victims have forfeited the right to be treated like children. If there is no suitable juvenile institution, they should be locked up in prisons.'

The idea of streets full of kids who've been in jail and think they're hard is much more frightening than the thought of some of the tax I've paid is being spent on some teenager on an outward bound course. When will they learn? Battered kids, batter back.

### A USELESS OPERATION



I know Charing Cross Hospital is facing the sharp end of Virginia Bottomley's 'health reforms' but....The hospital blew £15,000 - enough for four hip-replacements - on a spring clean ready for a visit from the mad-axewoman. For God's sake. Shouldn't they be letting her see what it's really like....

### FACT OR FASCISM?

If there's one thing worse than members of the British National Party, it's ethical fascists. I was taking pictures at the Hackney Homeless Festival in May, when I saw a great shot of a guy with the biggest, snaky dreads I've ever seen, topped with a huge hat covered in daisies. I walked up behind him and just as I pressed the shutter button a hand shot in front of my lens.

'You can't do that,' an angry bloke spat at me. 'Do what?' I asked. 'You shouldn't take pictures of people without asking them first. He might be doing something...' he replied. I pointed out that I was quite aware of when I should or shouldn't take photos. I also made it clear that I was taking a photo of the back of the bloke's head! But that wasn't good enough. When I tried to take a second shot, the hand flashed up again. 'Listen,' I said. 'You have no right to inflict your opinions on me. You should remember that you're not the only one who thinks.' It didn't seem to make a blinding bit of difference he continued to rant at me. In the end I just shrugged and walked away.

This incident came back to me when I was talking to a Vegan recently. 'Oh you can't eat honey,' he told me firmly. 'It takes the bees home away from them.' This confused me. Surely if bee-keepers took bees homes away from them, the bees would bugger off and there'd be no more honey. 'Well what about bears,' I asked. 'Bears eat honey. I'm sure bears do more damage than your average bee-keeper. Anyway, I thought honey was one of nature's gifts. A natural sugar.' The guy shrugged. 'Makes no difference,' he replied.

Well now, I'm quite happy for people to think what they want but when they try and impose their beliefs on other people it's just as offensive as any of the '-isms' you come across. I reckon it's a shame that ethical fascists can't channel their anger into something a bit more significant - like saving the planet for example.



### WHAT A GAS

Another 'green' policy is bearing fruit, I see. Run down public transport, build as many roads as you can and clog them up with as many cars as possible. then wait for all the kids to die of asthma. (There's already been a doubling of cases in every health region in the country.) The logic? That'll stop them growing up to burn more greenhouse gasses.

### SMUG ALERT

The smugness of some of the government's press offices really gets to me sometimes. I recently called up the Foreign Office press office to find out how I could get hold of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 'I couldn't honestly say,' the press officer said. 'You could try to United Nations' office.' I thought it was strange that the Foreign Office didn't have any booklets at hand and said so. 'I suppose there's really not much call for it,' was his reply. 'In this country we take our rights for granted.' I wanted to enlighten him about the Criminal Justice Bill but held back. 'Well, I've met several people who carry the booklet around in their wallet,' I pointed out. 'Well my dear,' he replied. 'You're obviously keeping very bad company.' Grrrr.

### FROCK HORROR

I don't understand all the hysteria over the ordination of women priests. Don't these men realise what prats they're making of themselves, parading their misogynist paranoia in public? Anyway, male vicars and choirboys have been wearing dresses in church for years - isn't that more peculiar than a woman in a dog collar?!

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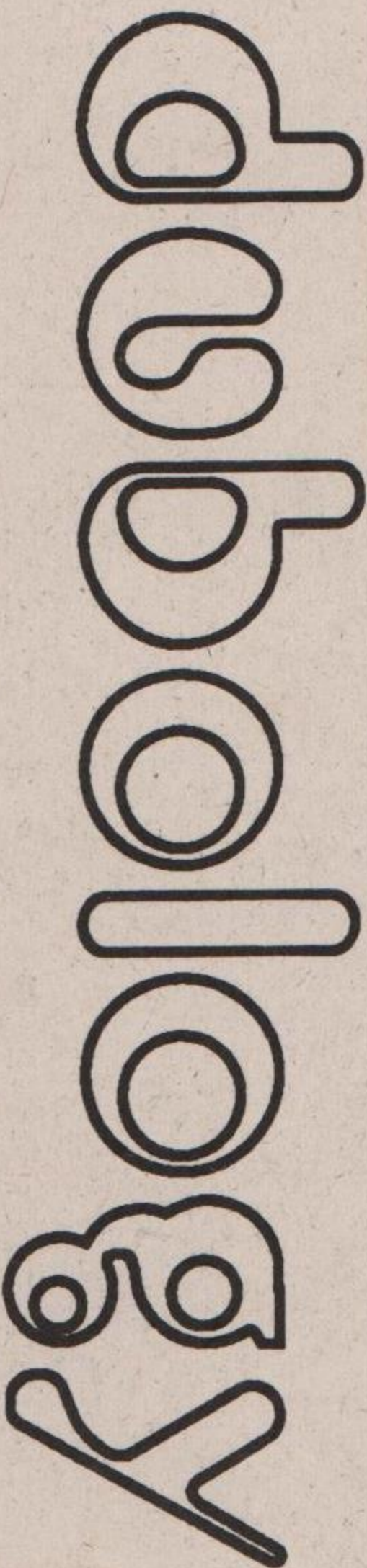
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