

NUAIGHT GHLAS

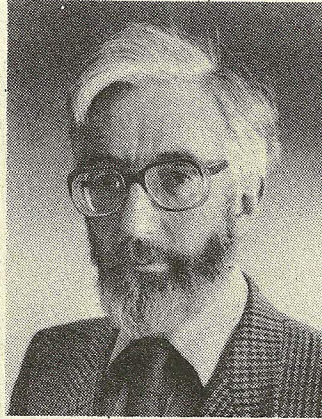


NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEN PARTY / COMHAONTAS GLAS No. 17 May-June 1989 ISSN 0790-844X

EDITORIAL

What can we say? ...Except thanks and congratulations, to all involved in the election effort, not least to Roger Garland T.D.

Whether this Dail lasts for long or not, we know that we've really arrived as a political force. So, while we marvel at the publicity and think globally, let's act locally and take all these opportunities presented to us. And let's be encouraged and assured by the fantastic success of the Greens throughout Europe, not least in Britain where the Greens got over 15% of the vote.



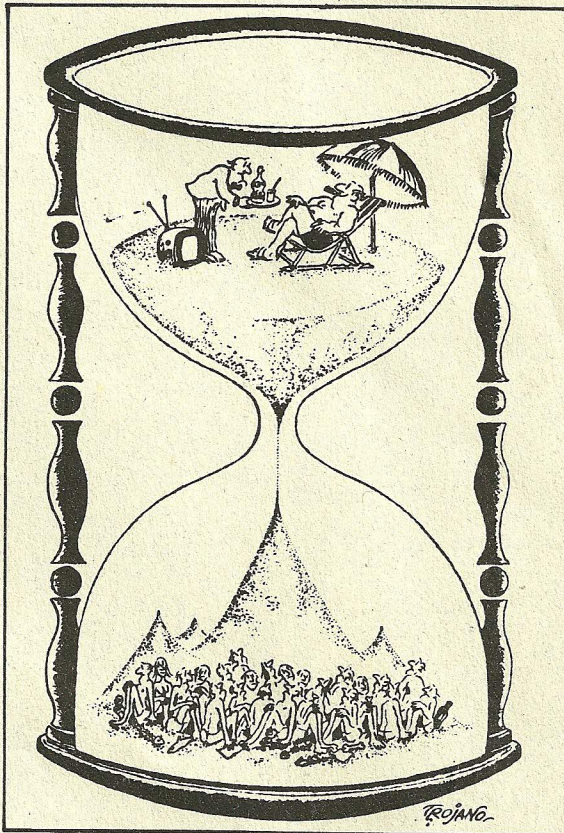
With all the media attention we've been getting, we might tend to forget that much quiet, careful work needs to be done. In that effort, we hope that some of the articles in this newsletter will help. Every article was written by somebody but we don't have all the names; nor did we have the time to track them down. So thanks to the anonymous authors as well as the named ones. Anonymous or not, your contributions are valued.

August Policy Convention

This very important convention goes on from 28 August to 1 September 1989 in Cranagh Castle, Templemore, Co. Tipperary.

The Green Party badly needs to put together long-term and short-term policies on a wide range of issues. Among these are Health, Education, Economics and Defence. These policies, and the way we go about deciding them, will make this convention fascinating, compelling and ...ESSENTIAL!

The cost of beds, food and registration is not decided yet but will be kept to a minimum. (Camping is free.) A form to book your place at the convention should be enclosed with this newsletter. Phone the office if you need more details.



Cartoon by Trojano from 'Drawing on our Environment' published by Folens

Now the Senate

In case you hadn't heard, more Green Party election candidates are looking for your support right now. John Gormley and Paul O'Brien are running for the Seanad (Senate). John is a candidate for a National University of Ireland seat, Paul for a Dublin University (TCD) seat.

To have senators of the calibre of John and Paul, and to have Green representatives in both houses of the Oireachtas — goals worth working for.

They're campaigning now; so, if you can offer help with addressing leaflets, telephoning etc. (or if you can send money!), don't hesitate. Pass on the word. Canvass all your friends who are graduates, and, if you're a graduate, don't forget to vote! Voting papers go out soon, voting is by post and polls close on 16 August.

Searching for Cancer Research

It has been said that there has never been a shortage of money in Cancer Research, only a shortage of brains. This appears to be true, as the fight against cancer by orthodox medicine is far from being over.

The American Cancer Society was founded in 1913 as an emergency temporary organisation in response to the hysteria generated by this dreaded disease. Since then billions have poured into "research" with very poor results. Since 1933, deaths from cancer have increased by 66%. In 1972, the death rate rose at the fastest pace in 22 years, at 3.3%. The death rate from cancer has been rising at a steady 2% ever since. ▶

► After 70 years of research and such a high failure rate, any other properly motivated organisation would have reassessed their research methods, true science being open to every possibility. The interested donor to cancer research will be horrified to discover that the method used is highly unscientific, 90% of research being carried out on animals whose reactions can never be compared to ours. Cancers induced in animals bear no relationship to a cancer which develops spontaneously in a human individual.

Animal research has long been condemned by honest members of the medical profession. Why then is this situation being allowed to continue? We can only assume that the state of "no cure" is immensely profitable to the vested interests. The chemical and drug companies, as well as being responsible for the majority of cancers (environmental factors, chemicals in our food, drugs etc. cause 85% of cancers) also manufacture the orthodox treatments for "curing" cancer: chemotherapy, radiation etc. These therapies are known to be useless and further damage the body's defences. Is it any wonder that the untreated live longer? (Ref. Dr. Hardin Jones, Professor of Medical Physics, Physiology at Berkeley, California)

Vital information about the natural therapies which cure cancer are suppressed, e.g. Max Gerson, a U.S. doctor who cured Albert Schweitzer's wife of TB. His clinic struggled for years against threats of closure. He successfully treated cancer patients who were written off by orthodox medicine. He was hailed by Schweitzer and all who knew him as a medical genius, yet his success rate was ignored and he died unrecognised by orthodoxy.

Given the above, one would be justifiably concerned that AIDS research would follow the same pattern as cancer research. Already millions have been donated, and it is known that animals are used as research tools. Little is publicised about the AIDS victims who respond to natural therapies which strengthen the body's immune system. It is again suggested that the more money invested, the more quickly a cure will be found. The prospect looks bleak if this fraudulent research is allowed to continue. If the public were less in awe of the research community and called for the adoption of true scientific research – clinical observation, natural therapies etc. known since the time of Hippocrates – we would all benefit. Clearly, to date there is not only a lack of brains in research but also a lack of integrity on the part of those knowingly prolonging this lucrative research industry.

Mary-Jo Gibbons

Letter from Japan

[Margie Bach forwarded this letter with its attached message. -Ed.]

Foundation for Flowering and Greening
Kayama Shinden,
Shibayama-cho, Sanbu-gun,
Chiba, Japan T289-16

Dear Sir:

As we approach the 21st Century and as the environmental crisis of the earth is proclaimed, emission control of Freon gas is likely to be imposed. Other counter-measures for environmental protection have already been gradually adopted toward our brighter future. You have been engaged in such movements and constantly achieved good results from the early days of the environmental protection movement and we would like to thank you and express our sincere respect to your efforts.

Four years ago, we established a foundation to seek peace and love in our minds through flowers and greenery. Although we are still a new participant in this movement, we have combined our efforts through such activities as

training courses in farms and construction of a "Flower Village" toward the creation of a peaceful future.

From the olden days, we Japanese have blended with nature and have lived with a sense of gratitude and awe toward nature. We think it is necessary to recover the Japanese mind that has been forgotten in everyday routines and convey it to the rest of the world.

Fortunately, in Japan, more and more people are becoming concerned about flowers and preservation of greenery. Their interest is shown in a more calmness of the heart and spiritual affluence in their lives.

With the proclamation of the national holiday, "Green Day", on April 29th, we are planning to launch a movement. We are going to form a network of one million and ten thousand people who will sow a total of 100 million flower seeds that will bloom into flowers of love. Also, we are planning to invite children to our movement and we wish that in their tender sensitivity, the truth of nature will form its bud. We are going to continue this movement that respects the interaction of the human mind through flowers with delight and patience.

We are sending you this message with the anticipation of joining your activities, receiving your guidance and being a part of the network for peace on earth. We sincerely wish you further development in your activities.

Yours respectfully,
Shigeo Nagashima
(president of the Foundation
for Flowering and Greening)

MESSAGE

Whenever seeing flowers and greenery, all human beings share one common heart.

The heart consists of affection that wells up like a spring, adornment for beauty, dream and hope.

And the joy to live together.

The mind of trust and peace.

Spiritual comprehension of the way of nature and the universe.

It is a common humanity that cannot be altered throughout the human race.

It is an eternal humanity that has not changed since the very early days of our history.

When all the people on earth begin to fully and freely exhibit this common humanity in their daily lives, man will head toward the creation of a peaceful global community. Gaia (the ecosystem of the earth) will regain its vitality and be refreshed.

The marvelous order of the universe and the benevolence of the earth will pour down upon us.

Flowers and greenery are the symbols of individuality and culture.

All human beings bloom in their individuality with a common heart. Each flower reflects each individual and race. And each thought of each person and each race.

Now, raise flowers and greenery as much as we can, let ourselves blend in with them and give our ideas full swing. Let's develop eternal nature that commonly exists in all human beings to its limit freely.

This is the day of commemoration to get together with such consciousness and this is the day to share such understanding.

On the day of Green when we meet on the green carpet of the field of April.

(Words by Masaru Takuma)

The National Plan: £9.1 Billion for 6000 Jobs!

The Government's national plan presented to the European Community envisages a total bill of £9.1 billion over five years. The result of this massive expenditure, according to their own optimistic figures, will result in just 6,000 extra jobs being created each year – hardly good value for money!

Even if their forecasts are true, this means that a total of 35,000 jobs will be created in Ireland each year – less than the current rate of emigration – and that is before subtracting the jobs lost.

And there will be many jobs lost. Even those who supported the Single European Act, which dealt with the whole 1992 process, admitted that Ireland would need EC handouts to compensate for the disadvantages that would result for Irish industry. That is one reason why the Green Party - Comhaontas Glas opposed the SEA and described the proposed EC hand-outs as "the nation's dole" as it was essentially to compensate us for increased unemployment. It is clear to everyone from this plan that it will not go very far towards that.

TRANSPORT

One of the major problems in this country, and particularly in Dublin, has been the damage caused by road-widening. It is all the more objectionable given that much of this could be avoided if the money was spent on providing decent public transport systems which would reduce the pressure on road-space.

The national plan proposes to continue the blind pursuit of motorway-building at the expense of public transport. The highly unpopular Eastern Bypass for Dublin is resurrected in the plan. But there is no mention of the much-needed DART link to Tallaght.

At a time when the already run-down Dublin bus service is being cut back by one seventh, this plan proposed to spend £1 billion on road schemes and a derisory £45 million on public transport. Another point is that it is all very well getting money to build high-quality roads but who is going to pay for their expensive maintenance once they are built? The country is already incapable of maintaining the roads that we've got.

THE ENVIRONMENT

It has been argued by successive Governments that the EC could be used to tackle the hazards posed by Britain's nuclear power stations positioned around the Irish Sea. The hypocrisy of this view is exposed in this plan. One of the proposals is to construct a power line across the Irish Sea to link into the British electricity grid. Ireland would then be buying power from the very nuclear plants that we are supposed to be objecting to.

One of Dublin's most pressing needs is for full treatment of the sewage being piped to Ringsend, especially now that Dun Laoghaire's system is about to add to the load. Yet the plan gives no immediate prospect for such a vital project which should create many long-term jobs.

LACK OF CONSULTATION

It is not surprising that the national plan has ended up the way it is, given that the Department of Finance allowed little real input from regional or local groups. It is essentially just a continuation of the sort of planning that has led to the mess this country's already in.

The EC guidelines specifically stated that there was to be real input from local groups and it may well be that Ireland will get less money from the EC finds because of the Government's blatant flouting of the rules.

ALTERNATIVE PLAN

The Green Party's candidate for Dublin in the European elections on June 15th, Mr. Trevor Sargent, has already ex-

pressed support for the alternative plan put forward by the country's community groups. This contains many elements proposed by Mr. Sargent when his candidacy was announced in January.

In this plan the emphasis is on community-based projects, which have a consistent record of being better value for money than the much publicised million-pound handouts to multinationals. Also, the plan concentrates on public transport investment and other environmentally beneficial projects such as sewage treatment and inner city renewal. Other countries have woken up to the fact that these types of projects are also good for creating work. It's about time the Department of Finance realised this.

NO GUARANTEE

It is important to remember that there is no guarantee that this country will obtain as much as the £2.7b of EC money which this plan wants. In fact, it is almost certain that the Government has inflated the figure in the expectation that the EC will not cough up for all that we want. And if the EC funding falls short of target then the Government's spending and that from the private sector will also be cut back. So it remains to be seen just how much of this plan ever comes to fruition.



Recent Developments/Changes

Margie Bach has been ratified as Co-ordinator by the Council.

Roger Garland has resigned as Co-ordinator.

Paul O'Brien is on leave of absence from his Co-ordinator post until October.

Maire Mullarney has been ratified as GP/CG representative on the European Greens Co-Ordinating Group.

The next Council meeting is on July 22nd.

More copies of the Manifesto are being printed. Make sure you get yours.



The Burren Goats

For no less than 5000 years, wild goats have roamed the Burren. Far from being pests and scavengers, they maintain a safe ecological balance by eating the hazel scrub which would otherwise choke the delicate vegetation. They are a particularly good-looking form with thick shaggy pelts and great wavy horns.

In recent years, their numbers have dwindled drastically. This is due to goat-rustlers who round up as many goats as they can and shove them into vans for slaughter abroad. If this continues unchecked there will be no wild goats left. However there is hope.

A local man, John McNamara, has established a "Foster a Burren Goat Scheme". This consists of outright purchase of one or more goats at £12 each plus £5 per year grazing fee. Each goat will then be marked with a special nonremovable brand which will make it more difficult to kidnap. I have bought two goats – Buckthorn and Jamara. In this planet of ours where there is so much pollution of land, air, sea and sky, it is only too easy to become disheartened and do nothing. At least by fostering a goat it's a start.

For further information, please contact: John McNamara
Admiral's Rest
Fanore
Co. Clare
Tel. 065-76105

Fiona Garland, Spokeswoman on Animal Affairs

Ireland Ignores Tibet

[This was written before the June massacres in China. Are we even less likely to remember Tibet now?]

Despite the fact that Ireland was one of the few countries that spoke out against the Chinese invasion of Tibet which started in 1949, in recent years our pursuit of trade links with China has meant that the Irish Government has turned a blind eye to the atrocities being carried out in Tibet.

The Green Party – Comhaontas Glas recently wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Brian Lenihan, to ask if the Government would support the idea that the Tibetan government-in-exile should have observer status at the United Nations, a status already given to the Palestinians.

The Government, however is not prepared to give even this minimal amount of support to the Tibetans. The minister's reply just talked about supporting talks on the dispute.

BRIEFING: Gold Mining

At least twenty prospecting companies are exploring for gold in Ireland at present. Two finds in Co. Mayo – one on Croagh Patrick and the other a few miles away near Doolough – are big enough to warrant opening mines and an application for planning permission for the first of them will be made this autumn. In Co. Derry, a mine is already nearing completion at Curraghinalt.

Almost all the northwest of the island – from the Antrim coast right across into Connemara – is under investigation, with additional work being done in the Galtees, the Slieve Blooms and the Wicklow mountains. "Ireland is now one of the most promising areas to look for gold anywhere in the world," said one prospector.

Concern is rapidly mounting about the effects that goldmining might have on the environment. Much of this has centred around the use of cyanide, the most effective way to extract the gold, since if this got into rivers or streams it would kill all life there. Unsightly workings, noise, dust, additional traffic and pollution by minerals such as arsenic, which is frequently found in association with gold, are also worrying many people.

Under an EEC directive, county councils have the right – but not the obligation – to ask that an Environment Impact Statement (EIS) be submitted by the mining company along with its planning application. This sets out the effect that the mine will have on water in nearby streams, on wildlife, on noise levels, on dust in the air and so on. Unfortunately, this statement will be prepared by specialist consultants engaged by the mining firm, so it will inevitably tend to favour the miners' interests.

There is a need for a truly independent assessment of the likely effects. The prospective miners should finance this through a fee paid to the planning authority, which would then be able to call in whatever experts it wished to assess the planning application. However, until this system is adopted, a number of tourist, angling and environmental organisations have set up GOLD-EIA, which is urgently raising funds to employ neutral consultants to assess the impact of the proposed Mayo mines.

If planning permission for a mine is given, it will set out the maximum levels of noise and pollution the mine can make. Unfortunately, no one has any confidence that these will be monitored and enforced, in view of the difficulties that people living close to Asahi, Tynagh mines and Merck Sharp & Dohme have had in getting information about discharges from these plants.

Briefing:

Tropical Rainforest Destruction

— The Irish Connection

Tropical rainforests cover about 8% of the earth's land surface yet produce nearly 50% of all growing wood. These forests support two-fifths of all known species of animals and plants. They are the homes of thousands of tribal peoples who not only live off the products of the forests but whose cultures and social organizations are closely articulated by their forest environments.

Tropical rainforests play a vital role in the maintenance of a balanced global climate. The climatic extremes we have been experiencing recently are associated with the planetary reduction in tree cover. Deforestation, which results in a lowering of the water table, is one of the principal causes of drought in tropical Africa and elsewhere.

Where large areas of trees are cut down, the tropical rains wash away soil nutrients. The soil, which formerly supported an extremely diverse ecosystem with mature trees reaching over 200 feet high, can now support only a siliceous grass that not even goats will eat. These "green deserts" are just as unproductive as their arid-land counterparts.

Despite their local and global importance, tropical rainforests are being destroyed at an alarming rate. Timber is being logged for export in many developing countries without an accompanying replanting programme and often without due regard for the local peoples' rights. Large areas of tropical rainforest are being cleared to provide pastures on which to ranch cattle, for beef export to western countries. Large-scale hydroelectric dam projects cause thousands of square miles of rainforest and farmland to be flooded, with the consequent forced removal of their human inhabitants. These are just some examples of the way that the West contributes to the destruction of the tropical rainforests, through the aegis of international lending agencies

Samples sent for examination by members of the public have regularly got "lost in the post" and, in other cases, access to the results of public monitoring has been refused since they were confidential to the Health Boards which paid for the work. One Tynagh farmer had to send samples to England before he could establish that his cattle were dying from lead.

But even if we had confidence that local authorities had the resources and the will to force companies to stick to the letter of any planning approvals that might be given, even if we thought that it was possible to extract gold with minimal damage to the environment, the Green Party would still be opposed to mining taking place.

Our opposition is fundamental: the gold is not needed. Most of the 100,000 tonnes of gold dug by humankind to date is still around, available for use if required. Of the 1987 output of 2087 tonnes, only 8.6% went for industrial purposes. The rest went into teeth (2.3%), investment (20.2%), coins (10.7%), jewellery (54.8%), and monetary reserves (3.4%), all non-essential uses.

So why use up irreplaceable fossil fuels and risk serious long-term damage to the landscape and the environment to extract something we don't require? To create a few jobs, none of which are likely to last more than five or ten years, since the Irish gold finds, though rich, are small. A rational society arranges things so that when its citizens work, they are actually doing something useful. Green Party policy is to strive for that.

Richard Douthwaite, Cloona, Westport, Co. Mayo
Tel. (098) 25313

such as the World Bank, because of its demand for cheap cash crops, minerals, timber, meat etc.

Local pressures on the forests from traditional slash and burn agriculture, firewood supplies and timber for housebuilding also take their toll of the diminishing forests but not at such a catastrophically rapid rate.

In Ireland we import the equivalent of 120,000 cubic metres of tropical hardwood logs per year. Of these, 73% come from the Ivory Coast in tropical Africa, where about 3,000 hectares of forest are logged each year to satisfy the Irish market. The Ivory Coast contains the only remaining stand of primary tropical rainforest in West Africa which is viable. The Tai forest, as it is called, is a National Park but despite its protected status this unique ecosystem is constantly under threat from illegal loggers, most of them European. Our demand for their timber is contributing directly to the destruction of the Ivoirians' natural heritage.

Tropical rainforests are a greatly undervalued national resource which is being squandered in the Ivory Coast as in many developing countries. At present the value of the standing timber is measured only as the cost of removing it from the site. In temperate countries where forests are managed, the value of the timber crop includes managing and replanting costs. One solution for developing countries might be for them to form a consortium along the lines of OPEC to negotiate a more realistic market value for their timber. The resulting increase in the price of tropical timber on the world market would allow the producers to reduce their export quotas to a sustainable yield without a loss of income. It would give the impetus for a conservationist management plan for tropical forests. Community managed plantations could be established producing quicker growing hardwoods for local consumption. The revaluation of tropical timber would force importing countries to reduce their imports of tropical hardwoods. This should then encourage the planting of more hardwoods by the consumer nations.

In Ireland we could do a lot to alleviate the destruction of tropical rainforests by being more self-sufficient in hardwood production. We have suitable climatic and soil conditions to grow both hardwood and softwood timber. Trees here grow three times as fast as on mainland Europe, yet we

have less land under forest than any other European country. So far the powers that be in this country have been fairly negative about the planting of deciduous forests. However, there is now a voluntary organization called "Crann" which has established a model commercial hardwood forest in Co. Leitrim. They provide training tree maintenance skills for those interested in growing hardwoods.

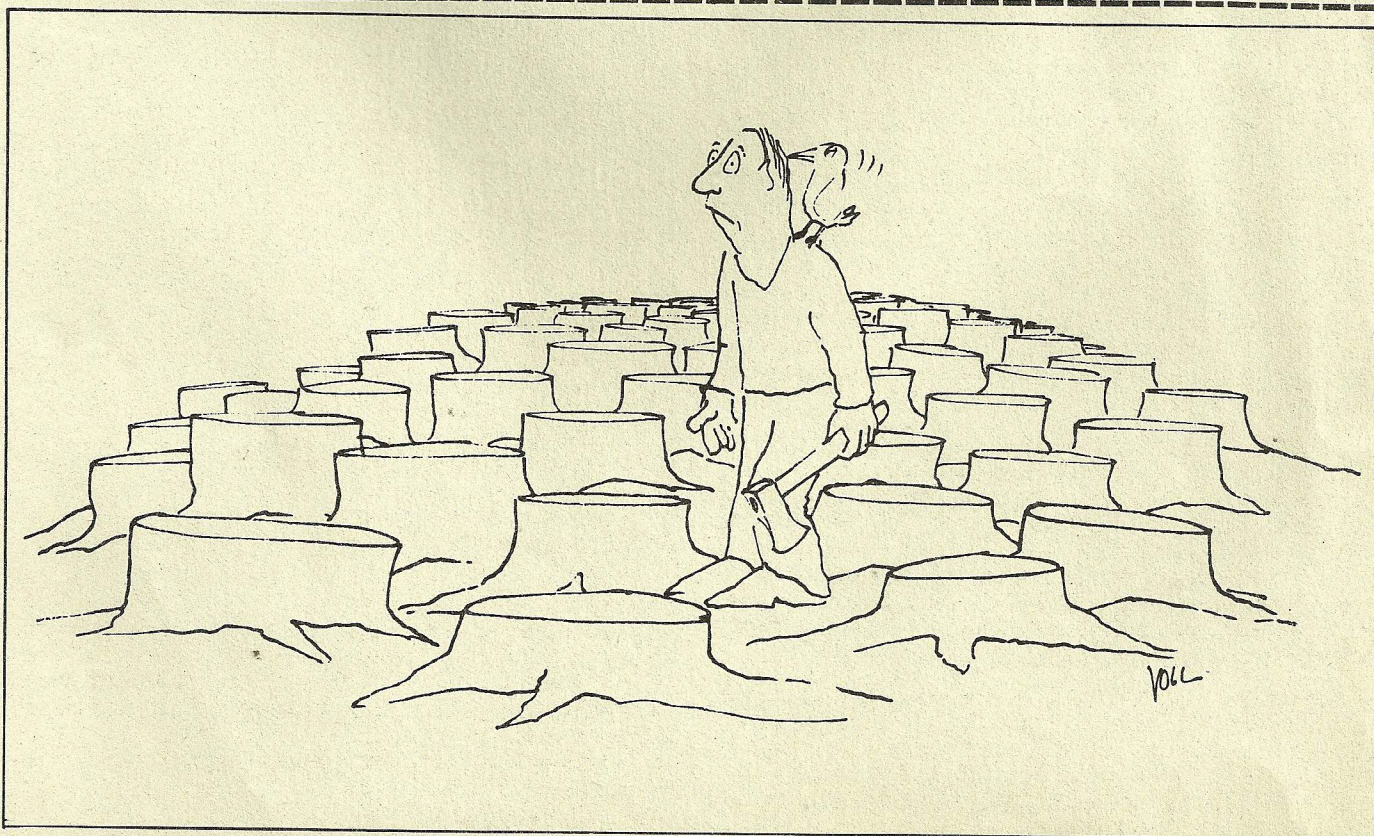
Another way in which the Irish public can help save the rainforests is to buy only Irish timber (until such time as tropical hardwoods are being grown on a sustainable basis.) Indigenous hardwoods are excellent for building, furniture making and kitchen fittings. Such trees are being felled daily all over Ireland to be immediately chainsawed into firewood or left to rot. Few of our magnificent elms, oaks and beeches which have died are being turned into planks. Even the thousands of oaks that were felled in Coolattin, Co. Wicklow in recent years were all exported in log form (some to be reimported as kitchen units from Germany). It is bad enough that the trees were felled in such numbers as to denude the countryside but that they were not used to produce some income locally adds insult to injury. It seems ironic that we would rather import tropical hardwoods for housebuilding and furniture than use the timber already available here.

Besides refraining from buying tropical hardwood timber we can also reduce our dependence on cash crops such as tea and coffee which cause the destruction of the rainforests. At the same time we can increase our consumption of products that encourage the conservation of the forests and contribute to the incomes of the local people, such as Brazil nuts, resins, aromatic oils etc.

The destruction of rainforests may seem a remote and technical problem but the repercussions will be felt here when hardwood timber runs out and our climate worsens. We have the responsibility to try to save the rainforest for our own sakes and the sakes of the tribal peoples whose homes are being destroyed and for the myriad plant and animal lives that are in danger of extinction.

It took nature 100,000 million years to create the rainforests and 40 years for humans to destroy over half of them.

Alison Badrian



Cartoon by Vogl, from 'Drawing on our Environment' published by Folens

South of the Liffey

The Harcourt Street Line

There would be no better time than now to overturn one of the worst planning decisions ever made in this country – the closure of the Harcourt Street line. The Green Party recently held a sponsored cycle along the roads adjacent to the line and members were able to see for themselves that the line is still essentially intact.

There is some possibility that the line may be used for a busway from Dundrum into the city centre – this was mentioned in the plan for EC funds for Dublin. With new cheaper rail and tram systems being developed, it would be quite feasible to reopen the whole stretch from Shankill, where the line joined the main Dublin-Bray line, through Foxrock, Sandymount Industrial Estate, Dundrum, Milltown and Ranelagh.

The approach to the impressive building on Harcourt Street which housed the terminal is now blocked by new offices – although they are so bland would anyone complain if they were demolished? However, if lightweight vehicles were used on the line they could continue at street level right into the city centre.

Sandymount Strand

For years Dublin Corporation have denied that there was any significant pollution of Sandymount Strand. They maintained this even though it flew in the face of all the facts. Now there are plans to go ahead with the "eastern bypass" motorway which, after passing through Booterstown bird sanctuary, will then be built along Sandymount Strand. When a local representative complained to the Corporation about this he was told by an official that this was no loss as the strand is so polluted anyway.

A Policy on the Travellers

Anyone who can help in formulating a GP/CG policy on the travellers should contact Liz Kennedy (ph. 976882) or Finian McCluskey (ph. 381370). The policy group will consist of both Greens and travellers.

Briefing: The Ozone Layer

The destruction of the ozone layer is one of a hat-trick of desperate environmental problems facing humankind. All three are interrelated, the other two being the loss of tropical rainforest and the greenhouse effect. Since ozone loss is much more easily stopped than the others, it is a test case. How we handle it will give some indication of whether life on this planet will continue.

1. The effects of ozone loss:

Ozone loss is much more serious than has been admitted so far. A 1% drop in ozone cover allows a 2% increase in the level of ultraviolet (UV) radiation to get through from the sun. This in turn causes an 8% increase in the incidence of skin cancers, some of which can be fatal. Increased UV also causes eye cataracts and reduces our resistance to disease. It breaks down molecules in plant cells, slowing photosynthesis and hence reducing crop yields. At a high enough level, UV will kill all terrestrial plant and animal life.

But it is the marine food chain which under the most immediate threat. UV radiation has already increased by about 10% over the southern oceans. This is close to the level at which the plant plankton living in them will be killed. Scientists say that the plankton is already under very drastic stress and if it dies, the creatures which depend on it, from krill to penguins and whales, will die too. The loss of the plankton would accelerate the greenhouse effect as the plankton absorbs the main "greenhouse gas", carbon dioxide, in order to grow. The seas would eventually cease to be the earth's main "sink" for CO₂.

2. What is destroying the ozone?

Two groups of gases are the main culprits – chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons. Both these gases are very safe and stable at ground level but when they float up into the stratosphere, UV radiation from the sun breaks them down to release chlorine atoms from the CFCs and bromine atoms from the halons. These free atoms go blundering through space, breaking up the ozone, until they bump into one of their own kind and form a stable molecule which sinks back to earth. It is estimated that one chlorine atom will destroy 100,000 ozone molecules before finding a mate and settling down. Bromine atoms are even more destructive.

This process has been known for some time. However, what has alarmed the scientists and caused the recent flurry of international conferences is that the reaction is accelerated many times by the presence of ice particles, which is why ozone holes have appeared over the poles when the sun returns at the end of the polar winters.

There is another threat to ozone. Methyl chloride, produced by the burning of the Amazon forests, is suspected by some scientists, although the evidence is not yet incontrovertible.

3. Do CFCs do other damage?

Yes. They are also a greenhouse gas and have 20,000 times the heating effect of CO₂. Fiona Weir, Friends of the Earth's specialist in this area, reckons that this damage is at least as bad as their effects on the ozone layer.

4. What are CFCs and halons used for?

CFCs are widely used:

- * as cleansing agents in the electronics and dry-cleaning industries
- * as blowing agents in the production of polyurethane and polystyrene foams for furniture, building insulation and packaging
- * as a refrigerant in the coil in your fridge
- * in aerosols

Halons are used mainly as a smothering gas in fire extinguishers.

5. Can they be replaced?

Phasing CFCs out in aerosols – about a third of total consumption – is no problem. So is their elimination from cleansers and flexible foams. In other areas, there is no "drop-in" alternative, so manufacturing processes will have to be extensively modified or stopped altogether. For example, rigid foams – the type used as insulation in fridges – might have to be abandoned but, since other insulating materials are not as effective at keeping heat out, fridges will need more of them and increase in size.

Some of the alternatives are CFCs themselves, but with much less destructive effects because they have less chlorine or none at all. However, some of them may be flammable, poisonous or carcinogenic, and testing is still going on. Replacement refrigerants have been developed but will be more expensive when they get into volume production in 1991. There are no substitutes yet for halons, except traditional fire extinguishers like water and CO₂.

6. Who has caused the problem?

The developed nations. The OECD countries make 80% of the world's CFCs and their consumption – 900gm per head a year – is about ten times that of people in the poorer parts of the world. The EEC makes about 33% of the 1m tonne world output, the U.S. slightly less.

7. What is being done to correct the situation?

The key agreement is the Montreal Protocol which came into effect only on January 1st this year. It commits its developed-nation signatories to halve their consumption (not production – they can make and export) of CFCs by 1999. ►

► Developing countries who signed were given a ten-year deferment, so the result would be a 35% reduction in world use.

45 nations have signed (but not necessarily ratified) the Protocol and another 22 said they would do so at a meeting on the crisis in London in March. However, it is agreed by everyone except the USSR, which wants more research, that the Protocol is much too weak and that an 85% reduction is the least that would do any good. Many experts want a 100% ban. And, since the CFCs which have already been released will continue to do their damage for as long as a century, the cuts should be made as quickly as possible.

Negotiations to stiffen the Protocol were to begin in Helsinki in May. The EEC has already committed itself to a complete ban by 1999 and the U.S. has said it will follow suit.

8. What's the catch?

China. Most developing nations feel they should not have to make sacrifices to help cure a crisis brought on by the profligacy of the West, and the Chinese could soon become

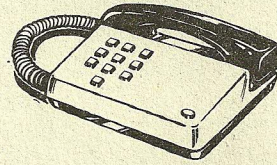
the world's biggest producers of CFCs as a result of their programme to put a fridge into every household. They have already announced plans for a ten-fold increase in CFC production. The key issue for Helsinki is how the West buys off this threat – and similar ones from other industrialising countries – by providing them with ICI and Dupont's technology for making the replacement chemicals and by giving them cash to help meet the higher costs involved. The UN Environment Programme, co-sponsor of the London meeting, has suggested a World Atmosphere Fund to pay for this.

9. Have we gone too far?

Enough CFCs to sterilise the seas might already be on their way up to the ozone layer. Scientists are already suggesting restoring it by injecting 5,000 tonnes of ozone a day into the stratosphere for the next century. They think this could be done by attaching ozone generators to aircraft on ordinary commercial flights or shooting frozen ozone into the sky with special guns.

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Animal Affairs	Fiona Garland 43 Butterfield Drive Dublin 14 Tel. 934239
Agriculture	Mike Curtis 31 Belgrave Sq. Dublin 6 Tel. 971118
Air Pollution	John Gormley 96 Morehampton Road Dublin 4 Tel. 973978
Basic Income	Paul O'Brien Joint Coordinator (see below)
Decentralisation	Gillies McBain Cranagh Castle Templemore Co. Tipperary Tel. (0504) 53104
Energy	Tom Simpson 28 Shanliss Way Dublin 9 Tel. 374673 (h) 303133 (w)
Foreign Affairs	Colm O Caomhanaigh 87 Ringsend Road Dublin 4 Tel. 601603 (h) 766460 (w)
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Language	Trevor Sargent Tigh an Oide Sraid Hampton Baile Brigín Co. Baile Atha Cliath Tel. 412371 (h) 412489 (w)
Natural Environment	John Gormley (see Air Pollution)
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Urban Conservation	Gerry Boland 32B Iveagh Flats Bull Alley St. Dublin 8 Tel. 544884 (h) 794291 (w)
Work	Paul O'Brien Joint Coordinator (see below)
Water Pollution	Patricia McKenna 12 Heytesbury St. Dublin 8 Tel. 543307

Don't forget Northern Ireland

[This article by the Kerry Greens, written in April, is particularly interesting in view of the fact that Northern Ireland hardly got a mention in the recent election campaigns.]

Irish MEP's have failed to make use of the European Parliament as a forum to explore a peaceful resolution of the Northern Ireland crisis. For as long as each individual MEP is drawn from the existing warring factions, whether DUP, SDLP, Fianna Fail or Fine Gael, all they will achieve in Brussels is the presentation of a bewildering and complex problem to which there is no solution. This is a great loss to us all for the European Parliament could be used as a forum for positive debate of the issue rather than simply another battleground to re-enact the old quarrels upon.

Ireland's Green Party is the only party which can claim to represent the peoples of Ireland rather than a section of them. This is because whilst on the one hand we are anti-imperialist and therefore sympathetic to the republican tradition, on the other hand we are radical decentralists and supporters of minority rights, which makes us sympathetic to the Unionist tradition. In this way we can present to the European Parliament a coherent argument which truly takes on board the sentiments of the peoples of Ireland as a whole.

As constituted at present, Northern Ireland is not a democracy and therefore inherently unstable. At the same time, any United Ireland, unitary or otherwise, which is wholly severed from the rest of the United Kingdom, would be equally undemocratic and unstable. The government of Northern Ireland is primarily a matter for the people of Northern Ireland and we therefore advocate that its present undemocratic structure be dismantled and then rebuilt by its own peoples through a consensus-based political process. Ways of doing this have already been outlined by the Belfast-based English writer P.J. Emerson and the Ballymoney-based Independent Senator Dr. John A. Robb.

We further call for the replacement of the British Army by an international peace-keeping presence and the

restructuring of the Northern Ireland police force. We call for the replacement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement with a simple statement of support for a new constitution there founded upon consensus. In this context we also call for the removal of Articles 2 and 3 from our constitution. We abhor equally the violence perpetrated by those who seek to maintain Northern Ireland's undemocratic status by force and the violence of those who seek to alter it by force.

The Green perspective is unique. The goodwill towards Ireland which undoubtedly exists in Europe cannot be tapped for as long as we export our old ways of thinking to the European Parliament. A Green MEP from Ireland could open up the debate there in such a way as to make a major contribution to the pursuit of a lasting peace with justice for us all.

The EC and Neutrality

At a recent meeting of representatives of the Green parties from the five European neutral countries (Ireland, Sweden, Austria, Finland and Switzerland) it was agreed that membership of the European Community (EC) is incompatible with neutrality.

This clear position is in stark contrast to the hypocritical statements by the bigger parties in Ireland that they will maintain Ireland's neutrality while at the same time trying to turn the EC into a United States of Europe which will inevitably involve military co-operation, if not one army.

There is no doubt that the EC is trying to become a military superpower. The Irish Green Party has done much to draw public attention to this. The other Irish parties have tried to ignore it because of their embarrassing links with parties in Europe who support military co-operation.

All of the European Green parties agree that the EC should not become any bigger until it is changed to a form acceptable to Greens and so the Greens in non-member countries oppose any plans to take their countries into the Community.

completed, nearly everyone will have emigrated and there will be hardly anybody left to collect basic income.

To be fair, Roberts was writing about the British economy and didn't think about emigration. But I still think the proposal to phase in basic income over ten years won't work.

Also, he wants to change the income tax laws to allow a deduction for non-mortgage interest paid on loans. It would be applied to the real rate of interest. That is, if the interest rate is 14% and inflation is 8%, the borrower could claim a deduction on a real interest rate of 6%. I think this is a mistake. The non-borrowing taxpayers shouldn't be made to subsidize extravagant borrowing on credit cards etc., which tends to push up interest rates and leads to people having serious debt problems.

Apart from these minor problems, the ideas expressed in this book are sound, in my view. The book is easy to read and I recommend it to everybody.

Richard L. Bach

BOOK REVIEW

A Design for a Market Economy by

Keith V. Roberts, Preview Edition, 1985

I found this a delightful book. Roberts was a British nuclear physicist who had a long-term interest in economics. He died in 1984. He seems to have been a caring and compassionate person who had a fresh approach to economic problems.

He talks about the adiabatic principle, which he claims can be transferred from physics to economics. Basically, the idea is that one should phase in major economic regulatory changes slowly, over a period of several years, so that the economy can find a new equilibrium, displaced workers have a chance to find new jobs and firms have time to adjust to the changes.

In general, I agree with this. However, specifically, he wants to phase in basic income slowly over a period of ten years. I think that this is a mistake. It means that the government will have to operate both the basic income and social welfare systems for ten years, which will be complex and costly. Also, if we have to wait, say, five years for basic income to be started and then another ten years to be

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