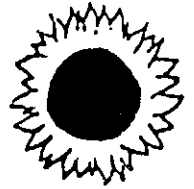


GREENHOUSE



The Newsletter of the ONTARIO GREENS



ISSUE 5

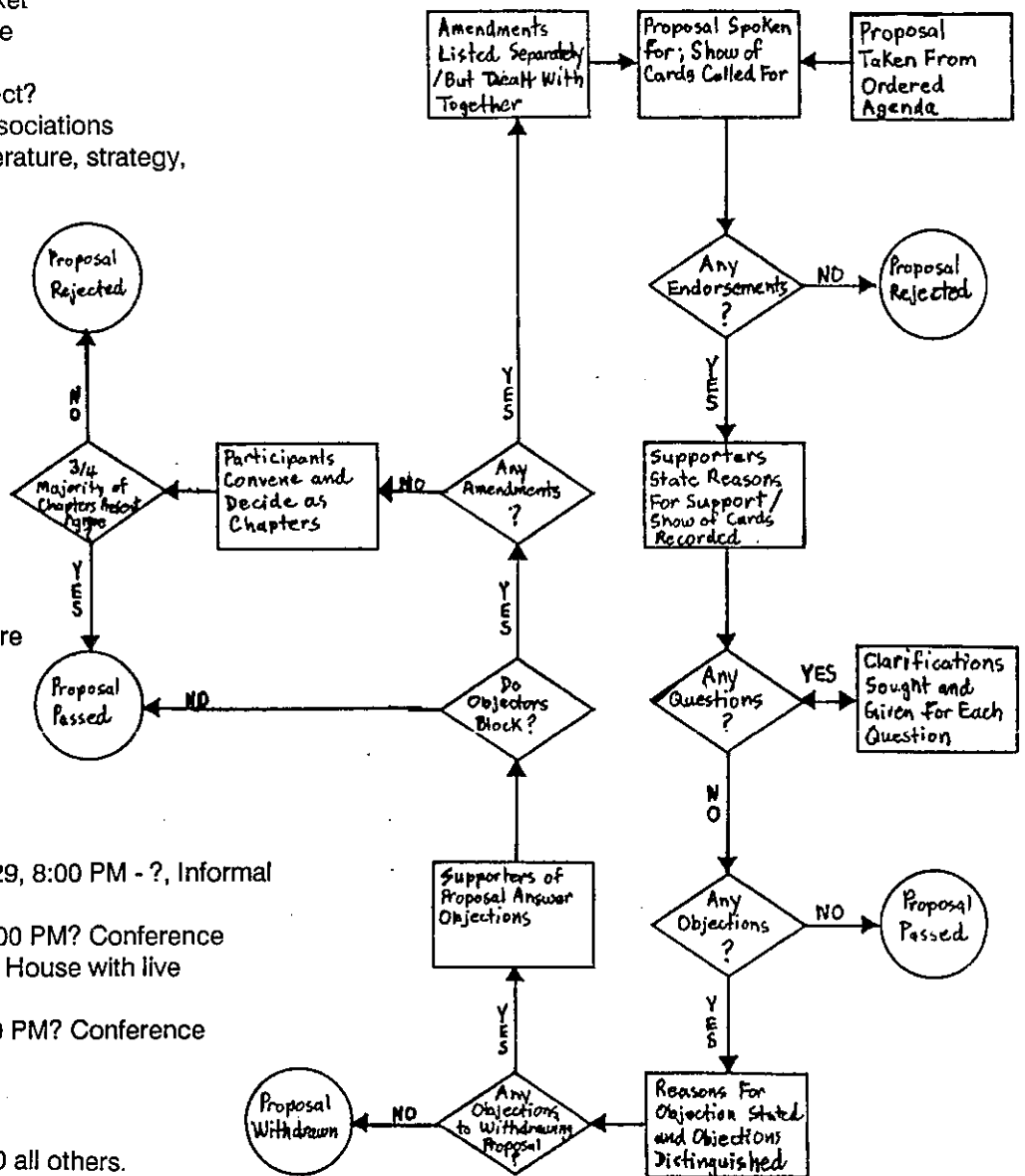
MAY 20, 1987

ONTARIO GREENS POLICY CONFERENCE
MAY 30, 31 st. KINGSTON

CONFERENCE AGENDA (unordered)

- Financial support for the Green Packet
- Financial support for the Greenhouse
- Policy ratification
- Next conference. Where, what subject?
- The endorsement of Constituency Associations
- Election Support Group (election literature, strategy, policy booklet)
- Press conference re ratified policy
- Ontario spokesperson(s)
- Constitutional Review Committee

START HERE:



Queens University
Kingston, Ontario

International Centre
John Deutche University Centre

Schedule of Events: Friday, May 29, 8:00 PM - ?, Informal party at 99 York St.

Saturday, May 30th; 10:00 AM -6:00 PM? Conference business, 8:00 PM - midnight Coffee House with live entertainment.

Sunday, May 31st, 10:00 AM -6:00 PM? Conference business.

Fee: \$25.00 fully employed, \$10.00 all others.

Conference Coordinator; Stephen Burch, 112 William St. Kingston, Ont. K7L 2C8, 542-2154

Conference Registrar; John Fowler, 179 Pine St. #3, Kingston, Ont. K7K 1X1, 547-4131

Directions: West on 401 until Division St. Exit, turn left on Division and follow it until it ends at Union St. Turn right on Union and cross University Ave., where you will see John Deutsch University Centre..

A PROPOSED DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR THE POLICY CONFERENCE

by Steve Burch

In order to get a lot accomplished at this conference, I feel we need a fairly structured way of proceeding, but one in keeping with our traditions and constitution. Here's a suggestion. Comments welcome!

Proposal Spoken
For; Show of
Cards Called For

1. The proposal is read off, preferably by the mover, and an explanation and justification for it is given by the mover. The facilitator then calls for a show of cards.

Any
Endorsements
?

2. One or more green cards raised indicates that the motion is endorsed.

Proposal
Rejected

3. If no green cards are raised, the proposal is dropped without further discussion. This could happen, for example, if someone not present had placed the item on the agenda.

Supporters
State Reasons
For Support/
Show of Cards
Recorded

4. Facilitator and/or assistants count number of each colour of card raised. The facilitator or recorder records the result. Those who raised green cards may speak BRIEFLY in support of the proposal. Facilitator has discretion to limit comments.

Any
Questions
?

5. After hearing proposal and its support, those raising yellow cards may seek clarification from mover or supporters.

Clarifications
Sought and
Given for Each
Question

6. Only questions of clarification may be asked. They should be addressed to the mover or supporter who make the unclear statement, and should be brief. The answer should be succinct and brief as well.

Any
Objections
?

7. After all yellow cards are withdrawn, the facilitator calls for a show of red cards, signifying objections to the proposal.

Proposal
Passed

8. If there are no objections at this stage, the proposal has passed by consensus.

Reasons For
Objection Stated
and Objections
Distinguished

9. Each objector, in the order established by the facilitator, gives reasons for their objections. All distinct objections are distinguished, with facilitator having final say.

Any
Objections
to Withdrawn
Proposal

10. The mover may decide that the proposal is premature or unpopular, and to avoid wasting the meeting's time, may allow the proposal to be taken off agenda. Facilitator asks for red cards (objections).

Proposal
Withdrawn

11. If there are no red cards, the proposal is withdrawn. Such a proposal may be reintroduced to the agenda of that conference, providing some amendment or new argument for it is presented.

Supporters of
Proposal Answer
Objections

12. If someone objects to the proposal being withdrawn, the supporters have an opportunity to defend the proposal and meet objections. Facilitator has discretion as to length of this procedure. At end of time allotted, facilitator may call the debate closed and

Do
Objectors
Block?

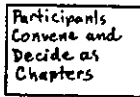
ask for a show of red cards (does anyone block?).

Proposal
Passed

If none, the proposal is passed.



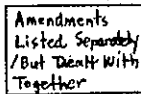
13. If there are objections, the facilitator then calls for amendments to the original proposal.



14. If there are no amendments offered, the proposal goes to a chapter vote. This may or may not occur at this time. All proposals requiring a vote may be pooled together at end of day for convenience. When time for vote comes, participants caucus as chapters for specified length of time and decide to adopt or reject proposal. A chapter failing to come to a decision is considered to have abstained.



15. The Proposal is passed only if 3/4 or more of chapters present come to a "yes" decision.



16. If there are amendments, they are listed separately, with facilitator having final say on the composition of the list. A motion to deal with amendments separately or in bunches is made by facilitator and carried by a 2/3 straw vote of those present.

17. The whole process begins anew and follows procedures as described above until the stage is reached where it is asked whether objectors block. If none of the amended versions of proposal, (or counter-proposal) manage to pass at any previous step, and each one is now blocked, then the amending process is terminated and a chapter vote is held (see procedure above). The first amendment or proposal of the bunch to reach the 75% requirement will pass. All others will then be rejected.

Please consider this process and make comments. The whole process is a suggestion based on the way our conferences have been run in the past. Please check to see whether or not your suggestion would require an amendment to the constitution if it were to be implemented. This will avoid delays at the conference.

Other rules of order will have to be developed, hopefully before the conference begins. If you are interested in the process, please give us a hand. Contact Stephen Burch, 542-2154, 112 William St. Kingston, Ont.

A MODEL FOR NEGOTIATION

Developed by women at Greenham Common

Greenham women identify force and militarism as underpinning our present mental models of decision making. In this process, groups came together, maybe they vote, then everyone pretends to go along with the majority - a "common front" until another vote comes.

The alternative used by Greenham women is a different style of decision-making. This is the process:

1. The women try to have all non-essential decisions made outside the meeting.
2. Before a proposal is presented, a small group works out details ahead of time, develops it as far as possible so that it is not a suggestion off the top of anyone's head. The proposal is made to the whole group (usually 70 - 80 women). There are two rules in dealing with it:
 - a) Everyone has to say something about the proposal. No one can keep her mouth shut.
 - b) You cannot definitely approve or reject, but can express feelings. If you say "Yes, let's do it" that polarizes the group.
3. After discussion the proposal goes back to the small group, perhaps adding one or two interested people, for modification. They try to be sensitive to what has been said.
4. The proposal then returns to the group a second time. Everyone then takes a stand on the proposal. There are four possible options:
 1. I accept and will work on it.
 2. I accept it but cannot work on it.
 3. I object to the proposal but won't stand in the way - i.e. "stepping aside".
 4. Blocking stand. I object to the proposal and don't want the group to do it. If this happens the proposal is dropped.

After the decision no one is pressured. Those who step aside may have creative ideas for alternatives, one can take a public or private stand or join a coalition for further discussion. A suggestion is that those who block several decisions may not remain long with the group.





NEWS FROM QUEBEC

by Rolf Bramann

Starting in October 86, Quebec Greens have developed their structure a bit different (probably) than other Canadian Green chapters.

Presently, Montreal Greens and in a wider sense, Quebec Greens have worked in two groups. There are the activists in The Green Party of Quebec (Le Parti Vert du Quebec) under their present co-ordinator and leader, Yves Blanchette, and there are the activists in The Green Party of Canada (Le Parti Vert du Canada) under their present co-ordinator Rolf Bramann.

We have established that some people preferred to work on the provincial level and with Yves Blanchette, but other people preferred to work on the federal level and with Rolf Bramann.

While Montreal seems to be the most active place in the province, Greens are also active in Sherbrooke, in the Lac St. Jean region and in Quebec City. Province wide we are between 300 and 400 members, but in fact, only about 10% choose to be active.

The federal and provincial Quebec Greens certainly have different working procedures and approaches. While the federal Greens have about \$1100 available and are in a financial sound situation, the provincial Greens have some problems and a \$700 debt. No wonder, they pay \$400 per month office rent alone...Whether this is a wise idea is another question.

Please find enclosed our new federal brochure developed in Nov, Dec, and Jan. and printed in February.

The Green Party of Canada intends to prepare itself early for the next federal elections which should be about two years away. In 1984, we had only 4 candidates out of the 60 in Canada. We do not intend to take such a low profile for the next election.

We appreciate very much being in contact with the Ontario Greens and invite you to keep us informed about your ongoing work.

CREATING THE ONTARIO GREENS COALITION

Andrew Scorer (588-8720)

The intent of the Ontario Greens (O.G.) Constitution is to have already-existing advocacy groups (eg. animal rights, environmental, peace, feminist, alternative energy, permaculture, gay rights, human rights, alternative economics, etc.) become chapters of the Ontario Greens.

At present almost all chapters are bodies created to be chapters exclusively of the Ontario Greens. They had no previous existence as grassroots groups, unaffiliated with the Ontario Greens Coalition. Somehow the current O.G. chapters must share an Ecological Vision with advocacy groups and invite them to become chapters of the Ontario Greens.

The O.G. purpose is - to show the common-ness among advocacy groups, the interdependence of solutions and allow groups to coalesce into a coalition.

TORONTO CHAPTER NEWS

Don River Walk 87 Completed

by Dalton Shipway

The second annual Don River Walk is over for this year. There was a good turn-out from the Public and coverage from the communications media, particularly television and radio.

Rehabilitation was emphasized under the slogan "LET THE RIVER LIVE". Repeatedly the statement was made that nothing will be done until the public demands it.

People who came and made statements or performed included Joanna Kidd, Sarah Miller, Charles Caccia, Jay Mason, Eric Peterson, Alice the Fish, and Ben Kerr. Several friends gave invaluable assistance.

The six watersheds in the Toronto area need a lot of healing, so another walk is expected next year.

Green Books

Green Books, a new committee of the Toronto Chapter, is preparing a catalogue which will soon be available. For more info write Green Books, Box 6248, Postal Station A, Tor. M5W 1P6

Literature Table

A very successful literature table was set up at Honour Mother Earth Day on Toronto Island. It was great to be able to hand out our new brochure.

**BRIEF TO HAMILTON HARBOUR COMMISSION
by Bill Darfler, Brantford Greens.**

First, let me discharge my responsibilities to the "Guidelines for preparing a brief at the public meeting".

1. Use goals for the harbour. The long-term foal of the action plan should be the re-recovery of the harbour as a self-regulating ecosystem. The harbour was not left to us as a bequest, it is borrowed from our descendants.
2. The costs to achieve those goals. Costs are traditionally conceived of in terms of financial expenditure alone. No amount of mere money will restore the harbour to a state of health, no matter how well it is spent. A battery of technological barriers to prevent further pollution will not cure the harbour if it's ability to regenerate itself remains crippled. Only a basic change in the way humans live within the watershed can accomplish true recovery of the harbour.
3. The allocation of these costs. Obviously, real change must be paid for by everyone, and not just in terms of dollars and cents. The true costs involve <investments of time, forethought, skill, and faith>, to quote Aldo Leopold.
4. My specific area of concern. My concern is that of helping to redefine the way we live on this particular piece of the planet. The harbour presents us with an early warning system as a result of its particular geographical situation. Pollutants that would be lost in Lake Ontario are concentrated in the harbour and their effects more easily seen.
5. The effect of the Remedial Action Plan on my area of concern. Although the words <ecosystem approach> are used to describe the R.A.P., the Interim Report does not deal with a whole-systems consideration of the problem. The pollutants are, by and large, taken as a given, with the emphasis placed on dealing with these substances at the S.T.P., or after they have already found their way into the water. The ecosystem we're dealing with extends to the boundaries of the entire watershed, not just to the waterline of the harbour.

Now that my obligation to the guidelines has been served, I'd like to sketch out a wider frame of reference than that of the Remedial Action Plan seems to be working within.

The long-term goals of any program of sustainable re-development must deal with the recovery and protection of the ecosystem's natural ability to regenerate itself. In the short run, the development of technological intensive-care life-support systems may be necessary, but these must not be used as mere crutches. The regenerative powers of the

ecosystem can only express themselves when the environmental abuses causing the distress are eliminated. These abuses are human produced, and their alleviation can only come from a real change in the ways we do things. Reform must be directed at agricultural techniques, particularly those that leave the soil, unprotected for long periods of time. Reform must also be directed at the way we develop the land for housing and particularly with the indiscriminate paving of large areas, increasing the instantaneous run-off following rain storms. Materials used must be re-used, re-cycled, and recovered to prevent environmental distress. All levels of government and citizen involvement must be co-ordinated to implement these reforms.

The thrust of the Interim Report is toward remediation alone. We must go beyond this to restoration; the reform of the ecosystem to recover the regenerative capacities it needs to withstand the abuses that are probably inevitable. A truly ecosystem sensitive approach to the problems of the Hamilton Harbour must deal with the prevention of abuses as well as with the treatment of the problems caused by those abuses.

I'd like to conclude with a quote from Aldo Leopold. <It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to the land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for the land, and a high regard for its value. Be value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense. Perhaps the most serious obstacle impeding the evolution of a land ethic is the fact that our education and economic systems are headed away from, rather than toward, an intense consciousness of land.

DURHAM CHAPTER NEWS

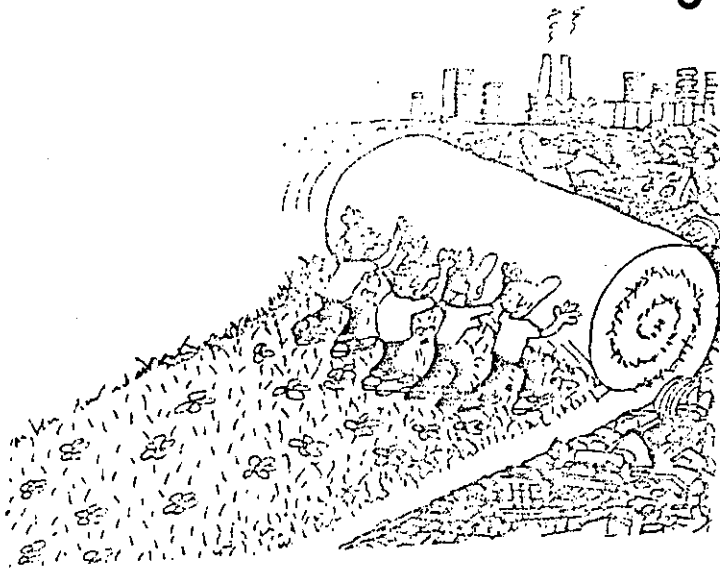
On May 6 the Durham Chapter sponsored an evening called "food connection" along with its sister group, the Marigold Organic Food Co-op. Along with the address from an organic farmer, a film and a film strip detailed the inadequacies of the food distribution industry. Delicious organic snacks were served to the 44 people in attendance.

NEW CHAPTER NEWS

A new group has been formed at McMaster University. They will be applying for chapter status at the May 30 conference.

The new Willowdale group has met twice and plans to publish and distribute a pamphlet on recycling in North York. They also will have an information table at the North York Peace Fest 87 on May 24.





FOR GREENS; A COMMON FOCUS?

By Dick Racey

If, by some fluke of the electoral process, in an age of rising disenchantment with existing political parties, Greens suddenly found themselves in power - surprising everybody including themselves - what then?

What fresh answers would they bring to the objections raised by the paper manufacturer: "No. We can't clean up our effluents. We can't afford to. Prices are too low, and competition is too keen. Force us to clean up the mess, and we'll close down our operation. That means we lay off all our employees, and the whole town suffers!" Or perhaps by their own finance minister: "Pay for the clean-up and install new equipment out of taxes? How can we possibly find the money, without increasing the deficit or cutting unemployment and welfare benefits?"

What would they have to offer the worker, or to the union representing him: "Fine. We'll stop producing these poisonous chemicals. But who pays me when my cheque from PolluChemCo stops?" Or to the seal hunter: "OK. We'll stop killing seals. But how do we get the money to buy food and pay the mortgage?" Or to the farmer whose fields are being washed away because of intensive single-cropping: "Sure, I'd like to give my land a rest. But how do I pay the bank? I have to squeeze every last nickel out of my land, or I lose everything!"

Before a Green government could make any but cosmetic changes it would first of all have to recognize and come to grips with the enemy: the vested interest we have in our own destruction and that of our habitat - and the economic imperatives which impel us toward disaster.

In our present economic system, whenever and wherever a "vested interest" is assailed or disturbed, a hue and cry is raised as someone's livelihood is threatened. Close down anything from a nuclear power plant to an arms factory to a tobacco field on Monday morning, and by Friday noon, politicians' phones will be ringing off the hook. Were they in power, those of Green politicians would ring just as loudly.

Western civilization thus functions within a behavioural straitjacket when compared with the collective behaviour of social creatures like ants or bees or beavers, or, for that matter, with that of human beings banded together in earlier forms of social and economic organization. Scuff an ant hill with a toe or breach a beaver dam with a shovel, and in a short time there is a burst of activity within the colony until the damage is repaired. There is no vested interest in the status quo to be overcome; no delay while "somebody finds the money." Sensing an opportunity to contribute their time and skill, individuals simply pitch in and get the job

done; nobody stops to ask, "How much an hour will I be paid?"; having no money to begin with, they are not inhibited by the lack of it.

With us, it is different. Not only is there the vested interest in the status quo to be overcome, remedial effort cannot be expended until and unless "somebody finds the money." Without that money, nothing gets started; and, once started, it comes to a grinding halt in a mire of unemployment and economic distress as soon as the supply of it dwindles.

Our behavioural straitjacket is an invisible garment donned, perhaps inadvertently, in one of the periods of our history least understood in terms of the changes wrought in our individual and collective behaviour.

These changes are analogous to those undergone by killer whales, captured in the open sea and then confined within a large aquarium. Soon after having been fenced out of their natural environment, they are to be seen leaping, rolling, and performing tricks - in response to the incentive of a dead fish proffered by their trainers. Their behaviour is from then on determined by incentive rather than by spontaneous interaction with each other and with their environment. The whales become, in a sense, "other-directed" instead of "inner-directed". Activity within the aquarium becomes highly structured - along lines deemed appropriate by the trainers - and grinds to a halt from the moment the trainer stops offering the incentive, or from the moment the supply of dead fish is for any reason exhausted.

History has done the same thing to us - on an almost universal scale. We are much like whales born in captivity who know no other life. Starting well before the Industrial Revolution, we have been evicted from the land in an ongoing fencing-out process that continues to the present day, to make room for a succession of crops: wool, tea, coffee, bananas, cattle - you name it.

In a psychological sense, the fencing-out process has resulted in our being alienated from two fundamental, life-sustaining, relationships: one with the land, and the other, our former cashless give-and-take relationship with our fellow villagers. In the latter setting, goods and services moved, not in response to "incentive", but rather in fulfillment of mutual obligation - an almost universal characteristic of cashless societies. Before the mass eviction, labour was contributed - as necessary; after, labour was sold - if it could find a buyer.

The result of these severed relationships has been a complete conditioning to and dependence upon money - in much the same sense that whales are conditioned to and dependent upon the dead fish proffered by their trainers. Ever since, we have been manipulated by incentive. When incentive is present and within reach, we act, often developing entrenched vested interests in our own destruction; when incentive disappears, we remain helplessly, and often hopelessly, immobilized - within our behavioural straitjacket. Laced within it, labour which cannot be sold cannot be deployed.

When the money supply dries up - as it can for many reasons beyond the control of individual citizens - and as it did during the Great Depression, individuals belonging to society can no longer buy one another's services; hence they cannot meet one another's needs - never mind bringing "expensive" remedies to bear upon a threatened environment.

Can we free ourselves from our behavioural straitjacket - as well as from our vested interest in our own destruction?

To set whales free, one might break a hole in the walls of the aquarium, allowing them access to the open sea. Once again roaming a sea rich with tasty alternatives, the whales would find that the dead fish had lost much of their attractiveness as incentives. Liberated from their further contemplation, the whales would once again be free to follow the dictates of their nature and to pursue their own objectives - their activities no longer determined by forces beyond their control.

To set men free, on the other hand, the technique must be different - because there are no physical walls to breach. But the key to freedom for whales or for men remains in the elimination of the incentives - and economic compulsions - which rule their lives while duping their minds.

But how?

In the case of men, this can be achieved by loosening the monopolistic authority of banks to create money - out of thin air in the process of lending - and instead conferring that power upon individual citizens. To the degree that this principle is implemented, to the same degree will freedom from incentive result and new possibilities emerge.

As unlikely as it may at first glance appear, the implementation of that change would result in the evolution of an entirely new type of economy: one in which goods and services no longer moved in response to incentive, but in fulfillment of obligation; one in which capital and labour, now separate economic entities, would be unified into a single force; one in which human need would be translated directly into purchasing power; one in which financial restrictions on the deployment of labour would disappear; one in which economic and political power would be decentralized; and one in which vested interest would disappear along with incentive. These results would flow from a fundamental change in the relationship between those who have money and those who don't.

In the present world in which we have been conditioned to money, if you have a dollar and I'm hungry and penniless, you have considerable power to persuade me to get to do what you want. For example, if you say to me, "Dick, see that big rock? Pick it up and move it over there." If I'm hungry enough, and there are all kinds of other people available to do the same work, you can safely bet that I'm going to pick up that rock and move it over there.

But the relationship between those who have money and those who don't is drastically altered when the individual, instead of banks under the supervision of the state, issues money and places it in circulation. This has already been tried, on a minute scale, in the LETSystem, now in operation for four years on Vancouver Island.

For readers not already familiar with the concept, LETSystem stands for "Local Employment & Trading System". In effect, it is a miniature economy, serving a small area, which circulates a quasi-currency called the green dollar. The way it works is this: If you, Bill Smith, come over and help me build my garage, I can pay you, at least partially, in green dollars. I do that by picking up the telephone and dialing the LETSystem number. A telephone answering device records the transaction: "Credit Bill Smith, Number 489, with \$100 green. Debit me, Dick Racey, Number 109, for the same amount." The recorded transaction, and a multitude of others like it, are then stored in a computer, the system's nerve center. I then work off my debit by performing services for other members of the LETSystem. The key feature of LETSystem, for present purposes, is that I, not the bank or the government, create the currency on the strength of my pledge to reciprocate to the community.

Now, say, instead of having federal dollars, you have an accumulation of green dollars. If you then say to me, "Dick, see that big rock? Pick it up and move it over there." This time my reaction is different because I now have alternatives. I can create another green dollar, equal in value to the one you have; or, I can help out - not work for - somebody else. My choice. Hence my question in reply: "What's that rock for? And why do you want to move it?" If you then tell me, "It's the cornerstone of a very profitable venture: a munitions factory". I might take my help elsewhere in order to fulfill the obligations in my prior issue of green dollars. But if you tell me, "Dick, it's the cornerstone for a hostel - for indigent social theorists", I might spring to your assistance.

Perhaps we'd better take a concrete example to illustrate the significance, and potential, of that change in our relationship.

Dr. Peter-Walford, a dentist living in Cumberland, B.C., just starting

out in practice, joined the Courtenay LETSystem. When patients with hard cash are scarce, Walford accepts, at least in part, green dollars for his services. As a result, a lot of people who can't afford good dental care are now getting it. In return, Walford has furnished his office with locally made furniture. Still, he was able to accumulate a surplus of green dollars. He then decided to refurbish an old school bus as a mobile dental clinic to serve patients living on islands in Georgia Strait. Fifty or sixty people were involved in fixing up the old bus and putting it back on the road - in a brand new role.

Of the experience, Dr. Walford writes, "I feel that the building of the bus has changed me in positive ways, and for myself its significance, beyond its successful completion, has been what I have learned in playing a part in the sowing of the new seeds that will some day displace the roots of the systems of money and thought and interaction that have brought us to the brink of ecological and military annihilation."

A simple story? But consider carefully the utterly changed conditions in which it all took place. The people who renovated the bus all helped out voluntarily; all had the choice not to help; as far as I know, there was no approach to any bank manager for prior approval; and at no point was the project brought to a standstill because of a lack of money.

The principle which the event illustrates is that to mobilize collective human activity in an environment in which goods and services are delivered in fulfillment of obligation rather than in response to incentive - one doesn't have to dangle carrots in front of people's noses. One dangles, instead, worthwhile objectives and people will, quite naturally, spring to their service. There is no shortage of worthwhile objectives, of social, economic and ecological importance, to pursue in our society; no shortage of labour, skills, will or imagination needed to pursue them - once people are liberated from the need for further contemplation of incentives and are once again free to contribute.

Meanwhile, Greens have habitually dissipated their energies in a multitude of divergent objectives. They have developed no apparent overall strategy for translating their aims into political reality. Their lofty policy resolutions are often like cotton candy, disappearing the moment one tries to sink one's teeth into them. They have developed no coherent diagnosis of society's ills - and therefore no consensus on what, if anything, can be, or need be, done about them. In comparison with Marxists, who have always known where they were going even if not everybody wanted to take the trip, Greens are generally likeable, dreamy-eyed intellectuals - steering first this course then that across the political landscape, seemingly uncorrupted by any irresistible craving for power.

It is perhaps high time that Greens developed, at the very least, a common focus: the emancipation of our labour, our thoughts, and our imaginations - in order to do what we must to survive on this planet. Perhaps, in time, they might fashion the green dollar into a major instrument in the achievement of that liberation.

IT'S HIS MORE HOLISTIC THAN THOU
ATTITUDE THAT I CAN'T STAND



The alternative: Local is lovely

by Michael Bradfield (professor of economics, Dalhousie University)

If we have enough confidence in ourselves, we can do anything. By developing local initiatives, resources, and strengths, we can create our own economic model. It will not only produce more jobs over the long term more efficiently, it will be cheaper.

Why is it cheaper to stimulate small local firms? Since they are offering few jobs initially, they are much easier to assess in terms of probable success. They cannot dazzle politicians with the promise of instant solutions to local unemployment, thus, they get much smaller grants to start.

Small plants cannot demand exemption from taxes or from legislation which protects the environment or worker health and safety. These are hidden costs of the multinationals.

And small local businesses, unlike the multinationals, don't need bribes to stay here. The large corporations are always after more subsidies and benefits after they have established and they hold governments to ransom with the threat of moving elsewhere.

Local industries develop much stronger linkages than the multinationals. The multinationals maintain their international supply networks. Local firms rely on local suppliers and therefore have greater "multiplier" effects on the rest of the economy. Even if they are relatively "high cost" they grow slowly and so can bring along local suppliers to meet their specifications. The multinationals, on the other hand, do not like to split up their purchases to give small local suppliers a chance to develop their expertise and production capacity.

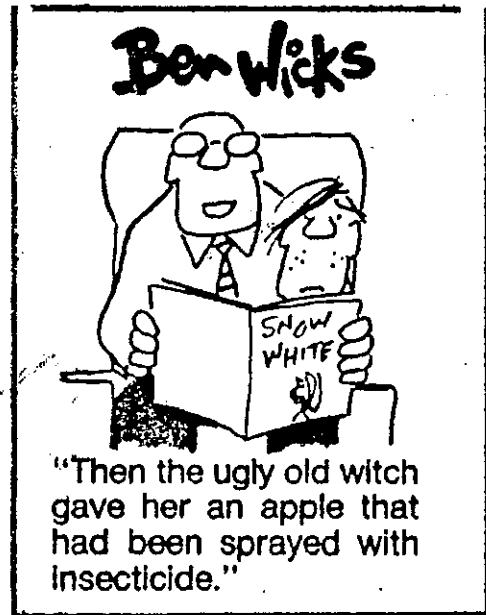
Local firms also provide increased stability to the economy because of their potential for diversity. Relying on a major tire or weapons producer means the economy becomes dependent on a few large industries. If any one of these goes through a bad period (such as oil in Alberta), the impact on the economy is large. However, a diversified economy of small businesses means that a slump in any one industry has limited importance to the whole economy and, therefore, is less devastating to employment. It also allows for geographic diversity so that the entire region benefits from generalized growth.

The stability of a local, diversified economy also works over the long term. The myth is that the large firms are safer risks. The reality is that the failure rate for small firms is at least as low as the large ones and the losses from failure, in dollar terms, much lower.

When a multinational decides the region is unprofitable, they take off with their management, equipment, and their best workers. When a local firm fails, all the components normally stay. The people involved may even decide to learn from their mistakes and try to start again. But when the multinationals start over, they do it somewhere else with a new package of subsidies.

Productivity is also often higher with local firms, particularly in worker-owned co-ops or worker-controlled plants. Even privately owned plants may be more efficient because of worker identification with local owners. Productivity may also be higher because local management is more aware of local attitudes and ways of doing things. While this can sometimes prevent necessary change, it is often helpful in anticipating employee reactions and making changes in a manner more consistent with the interests of the region.

All these advantages are not inevitable. Nor is a development strategy which emphasizes local development fast. Or easy. But it is an alternative whose time has come. It gives us a chance to realize our dreams and develop our potential without sacrificing our political and economic independence. It's time we were "flying on our own".



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