

The Little Green Book

by John Pearce

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“How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkly of the water, how can you buy them. We are part of the Earth, and it is part of us, the rocky crests, the juices of the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man – all belong to the same family. The shining water that moves in the streams is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must teach your children that it is sacred- that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of memories in the lives of my people. The water’s murmur is the murmur of my father’s father. We know the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next- for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs”

Extract from a speech attributed to the American Indian, Chief Seattle in a speech in 1854
(wording and source disputed)

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“We all moan and groan about the loss of the quality of life through the destruction of our ecology, and yet each one of us, in our own little comfortable ways, contributes to that destruction. It’s time now to awaken in each one of the respect and attention our beloved mother deserves.” Ed Asner

The Green Revolution consists of three steps:

1. The recognition that there is an environmental crisis caused by the way we are living.
2. A shift from an anthropocentric to a more ecocentric view of our world.
3. A shift from apathy to action.

“We no longer have the choice between violence or non-violence. The choice is between non-violence and non-existence” Martin Luther King.

Introduction

The Little Green Book is a guide to the Green Revolution. It is a Revolution for everyone, for rich and poor, for black and white, for North and South, for young and old, for atheist and believer, for weak and strong. It is a Revolution for all humanity. It is a call for urgent action.

It is not a Revolution of one class against another, of workers against capitalism, in the tired old dogma of class politics. We are all in this together. It is a Revolution in the sense of a turning around, a radical shift of viewpoint, a new paradigm. A shift from the dominant anthropocentric (human-centred) perspective, to an enlightened ecocentric (nature-centred) view of the bigger picture. It is a peaceful Revolution but not a passive one.

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The first step is to recognise that the way we are living is causing an environmental crisis. Why do we need a revolution in these days of apparently rising living standards for many people, when technological advances open new horizons? Because the change in the way we interact with the life-sustaining environment on this planet has to be that great to confront and mitigate the looming crisis. A quantum leap in our attitudes and behaviour is needed rather than the painfully slow incremental change and backsliding of the past decade.

The evidence of the ecological crisis is everywhere, however this short book may not on its own convince you. For this reasons some publications, which are particularly recommended, are referred to in the “Further Reading” section, and a list of some important environmental organisations is given in “The Green Network” section.

Sometimes the “signals” of the evidence of the environmental crisis become lost among the background “noise” of everyday life. Or the evidence is invisible to our senses. Unfortunately the old adage that “what you can’t see can’t hurt you” is not always valid, and certainly does not apply to some types of pollution, ozone depletion or global warming. At other times the signal is distorted because too much bad news won’t sell newspapers, and we rightly try to look on the bright side of life. However ignoring a problem does not make it go away. It only makes it worse when you have to face it. Every day, the “signal-to-noise” ratio of evidence grows stronger. Rainforests are dwindling, species are going extinct, topsoil erodes, greenhouse gases become more concentrated, communities become broken by crime and “progress”, pollution worsens, resources dwindle, the ozone layer thins and global population grows.

Put like that, the situation sounds dismal but that is the true picture. However it doesn't have to be like this. The Green Revolution is not for pessimists. It is a Revolution of hope, vision and empowerment, a Revolution for Community, a Revolution of the spiritual and the physical, a Revolution of the living principle against the force of entropy (decay), a Revolution for the solidarity of humankind, a Revolution where there is no need for opposition because everyone wins more than they lose.

An important feature in recognising the environmental crisis is the acknowledgment that in some cases, economic growth and the misapplication of technology have actually started to make our lives worse. It is not that growth and technology are in themselves wrong. Economic growth has raised the material living standards of billions of people. Technology has the potential to liberate the human spirit from drudgery and protect us from the random forces of nature. Advances in medicine have provided enormous relief from suffering. Improved communication has helped remove some of the distrust and suspicion that can divide communities.

Yet growth and technology have also brought us to the brink of social and environmental crisis, the destruction of tribal societies which were living in a sustainable way, a global market that increases competition and forces moral standards and working conditions to the lowest common denominator, and weapons of mass destruction.

The second step in the Green Revolution is the shift in awareness from an anthropocentric to a more ecocentric view. We do not know why we exist, although we may have beliefs in this respect. What we do know is that we only exist because we happen to live on a planet where the right physical conditions have allowed life to evolve over millions of years. Some scientists have referred to Earth as the "Goldilocks Planet", from the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", neither too hot for life like Venus, nor too cold like Mars, but "just right", and that realisation is important in the Green Revolution of awareness. Our existence on this planet may be purely chance, and it is contingent upon there being a physical environment within certain defined parameters that will support carbon-based life. If the intervention of our technology shifts the goalposts, we head the same way as the dodo and the dinosaur.

The development of the "Gaia Theory" by James Lovelock arises from this awareness, and his theory puts our species in a planetary perspective, rather than our usual anthropocentric one. The Gaia Theory (named after the Greek Earth goddess), proposes that all life on Earth is part of a single planetary organism, a cybernetic (self-regulating) system, which interacts with the geology, oceans and atmosphere of the planet, to achieve a life-supporting environment, and maintain it at a state of homeostasis (a relatively constant state) and oasis of negentropy (life) in a desert of entropy (decay). Humankind is an increasingly influential part of this organism, which some have likened to its brain. We are not indispensable to Gaia, and if our technology disrupts the particular environment for life that has favoured our species, Gaia may simply achieve a different state of equilibrium that favours a different sort of life. Gaia herself is not invulnerable should our interference excessively disrupt the environment.

So this is the second step in the Green Revolution, a shift in awareness and viewpoint, from being anthropocentric to a perspective, which incorporates the ecocentric, without becoming misanthropic (“people-hating”). The new viewpoint will be a balanced one. It involves thinking before we act, and in such a way that corresponds with our other beliefs, about what is best for the Planet, for our planet’s ecosystem, for God, for Gaia, for the force or concept of Good, for the principle of life over entropy. Mankind is the conscious interface between the animate and the inanimate parts of the universe, part of a dynamic, holistic ecosystem, one of many species rather than the only one which really matters, but with a special responsibility due to our power to manipulate the environment.

The final step in the Green Revolution is to realise that we cannot rely on leaders to change things for us, since if they knew what they were doing we would not be in this mess in the first place. Most national politics are still stuck in the same old anthropocentric mind-set, or trapped in the view that our only option is to compete in the global market place at the expense of civilised values and a sustainable future. The only way to change things is to break out of our apathy and our “leave it to others attitude and to join our friends family and our local community in changing things for ourselves. The last section of this book gives some ideas for putting the Green Revolution into action and “The Little Green Book” aims to act as a signpost, listing some organisations which are particularly recommended in the “Green network” section.

It is only by taking responsibility, by aiming only for environmentally sustainable growth, by using only the truly beneficial aspects of technology, and universally rejecting the rest, that we can achieve the real quality of life that we desire deep down, of close, loving communities, with good housing, education, and welfare services for everyone, of a clean safe environment for us and our children, and future generations.

This is a Revolution that requires sacrifice, but not without reward. The sacrifice at the material level is matched by a reward at the spiritual level, as the nihilism of excessive consumption is replaced by a rich culture, as isolation is replaced by community, and one gains the appreciation of being part of something much greater than we are capable of fully comprehending, a part of the force for good, of a common humanity, a living conscious part of dynamic ecosystem, of being the fixing gel of consciousness in a world of quantum possibilities.

The Green Revolution is one that requires a great deal of each of us, a willingness to understand the viewpoint of people who may hold views very different to our own, a willingness in many cases to put the past behind us and make a fresh start. It may require supreme tolerance and patience, to painstakingly find a compromise between extremes in such a way that ultimately everyone wins, and no-one needs “lose face”, a compromise which is not a feeble fudge but an improvement on either of the extremes on the continuum. Every participant must approach it in a spirit of generosity.

For those who criticise this interpretation of the Green Revolution for not being sufficiently radical, it is argued that it is better to be moderate, to carry the great majority of people with you, and achieve 80% of your ideal, than to be so pure, radical and extreme that you carry only a few and achieve very little. Moderation can be revolutionary.

A barrier to the willingness to make material sacrifices is the “Prisoner’s Dilemma”, the feeling that it is no good giving something up unless everyone else does, or the feeling that other people may cheat. But to “cheat” in this Revolution is pointless, because you are only cheating yourself, your friends, your family, or your children. Our species has grown so powerful that natural selection with regards to our species frequently no longer operates at the level of the gene, the individual, the community, or the nation, but at a planetary level. Either we all pull together in a spirit of global solidarity, or we all perish as the life-supporting environment on this planet is destroyed.

To summarise, the Green Revolution consists of three steps:

1. The recognition that there is an environmental crisis caused by the way we are living.
2. A shift from an anthropocentric to a more ecocentric view of our world.
3. A shift from apathy to action.

Join us in this Green Revolution and we will achieve not the tired, cynical, jaded, drudging reality that many of us live in today, but a sparkling, exciting, rich, loving, cleaner, safer future, in which is a celebration of the miracle that is life and consciousness on this planet.

The base-line conditions of life on our planet are such that life will always be a struggle. We will not achieve Utopia, but it is the feeling of a common humanity and of being part of something much bigger that makes the struggle and the suffering worthwhile.

Step 1: Recognising the Crisis

“If you take a frog its pond and put it in a pan of hot water, it will jump out. If you put it in a pan of cold water and heat it slowly on the stove, the frog will sit there until it boils to death. The frog’s senses are equipped to measure only large differences in temperature, not gradual ones. Today the human race has a lot in common with the frog in the pot.” The New Scientist.

“The Work is going well, but it looks like the end of the world.” Sherwood F Rowland to his wife on discovering evidence that Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) destroy ozone, quoted from “The End of Nature” by Bill McKibben.

“Never have so many systems vital to the earth’s habitability been out of equilibrium simultaneously.” Lester Brown and Sandra Postel, “State of the World”.

The first step in the Green Revolution is to recognise that there is an urgent and catastrophic environmental crisis that threatens our existence, caused by the way we live. To talk to many people, or to see the way many of us live, it is quite clear that this message has not sunk home.

Our approach to the environmental crisis is rather like how we deal with other crises. If the roof blows off our house, we treat it as an emergency, and get it fixed the same day. Neighbours may rally round. We are relatively good at crisis management and responding to dramatic events. However dry rot may eat away at the structure of our house for months, or years, causing thousands of pounds’ worth of damage, and although we may have our suspicions, we may ignore the signs, until someone falls through the floor!

The way that news is reported also masks the true extent of the global crisis. When Chernobyl nearly blew up, or thousands of seals started dying, or the ozone “hole” was discovered, this made news headlines. However the sort of environmental crisis that is like a dripping tap, slowly getting worse, tends to get ignored. There is also news management, whereby if bad news and doom and gloom hit sales or viewing figures, problems are ignored or glossed over. So a lot of the real environmental crises simmer quietly, only surfacing when they become too obvious to ignore, or when there is an important conference.

The way to confront this is to consider many of the environmental problems, and ask yourself:

“Are things getting better or worse?”

Is ozone depletion getting better or worse? Worse. Although there have been international agreements, because CFCs survive in the atmosphere for decades, and take many years to reach the ozone layer, things will get worse before there is any possibility of the ozone layer recovering, always assuming that agreements are kept to and that we have not caused irreversible damage.

Is global warming getting better or worse? Worse. The concentration of all the greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane is increasing. We simply do not know the consequences of what we are doing. The possibility of reversing change to the climate simply may not exist, and at any time an irreversible “flip” in the climate may occur, or positive feedback may set off a runaway greenhouse effect. As Bill McKibben puts it in “The End of Nature”, thanks to our actions, “Nature’s lifetime warranty has expired”. This was recognised by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who commented that we are conducting “a massive experiment with the system of this planet itself”.

Is the population crisis getting better or worse? Worse. World population growth continues unabated, five billion of us and rising, meaning more hungry mouths, more demands on resources and the planet’s carrying capacity, and less space for everyone.

Are overall levels of pollution getting better or worse? Worse. With every year our planet becomes more toxic, less suitable for life, and further from its once pristine state.

Are the rainforests being saved? No. They are being cut down or burnt.

Are species being saved? No, they are going extinct at an increasing rate.

Are there more or less cars on the road? More.

And so it goes on. These are just a few of the myriad of environmental crises. It is not nice to think about. It can be frightening or upsetting, but unless we are willing to face the truth, and confront news management and the “business as usual” brigade, we cannot respond to the crisis with the urgency that is required. Just because we haven’t reached the point of catastrophe doesn't mean that all is well. E.J.Mishan used the following analogy:

“A man who falls from a hundred-storey building will survive the first ninety-nine storeys unscathed. Were he as sanguine as some of technocrats, his confidence would grow with the number of storeys he passed on his downward flight and would be at maximum just before his free-fall abruptly halted.” With something as precious as life on our planet, the precautionary principle must be applied at all times.

The scale of our predicament is highlighted in the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that a 60% cut in fossil fuel use is required just to stabilise emissions of the greenhouse gases of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and low-level ozone. We currently consume approximately 54 billion barrels of crude oil a year, roughly ten for each person on the planet. A sixty per cent cut would bring this down to an average of four barrels or half a tonne of oil each year. That sounds a lot until one becomes aware that to heat a typical British house required almost four peoples’ annual “allowances”, and the average family car covering 11,000 miles a year, burns two peoples' annual fossil fuel allowance.

“The Little Green Book” is unlikely on its own to convince you of the overall environmental crisis, but a crisis there is. Some the best of the numerous publications on these and other issues are listed in the “Further Reading” section.

As McKibben says, we need a new humility to replace our jet-propelled arrogance, and a reminder that we are not independent of the Earth's underlying pulses or in the words of Robert Finch:

"The recurring cycles of the year are not simply entertaining phenomena, to be noted at our convenience and for our enjoyment, but signs that the cosmos is still intact, that we remain in something larger and more reliable than our own short-lived enthusiasm. It is for this that we need to know the insects will hibernate, that turtles and warblers will migrate and return, that the tide will retreat, the ice let go, the earth tilt back towards the sun, and the grass reawaken."

There is quite enough coal and oil in the ground to render this planet lifeless if we burn it all. There is quite enough Florspar (the source of the key ingredient in CFCs) to make the ozone layer disappear. There are quite enough chainsaws to chop down every tree on the planet. There is quite enough uranium to blow ourselves up many times over. The choice is ours, and we must act together. As the Worldwatch Institute warns us:

"Unless we all act together, there is little reason to act separately", or as McKibben states:

"The choice of doing nothing – of continuing to burn ever more coal and oil- is not a choice, in other words. It will lead us, if not straight to hell, then straight to a place with a similar temperature."

Step 2: The Revolution in Awareness

"What a man does to the Earth, he does to himself." Native American saying.

"The lighthouse on which we have been taking our bearings was built in the wrong place." Roefie Hueting.

"As the transfer of power to our species proceeds, our responsibility for maintaining planetary homeostasis grows with it." James Lovelock.

Once we have recognised that there is an environmental crisis caused by the way we are living, the second step in the Green Revolution is to adjust how we think about the world. Lynn White has observed:

"Despite Copernicus, all the cosmos rotates around our little globe. Despite Darwin, we are not, in our heart of hearts, part of the natural process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim."

We have tended to have a narrow frame of reference, for that it what our hunter-gatherer past has prepared us for. We tend to think in terms of what is best for me, what is best for my family, or my friends, and often what is best for my local community. Occasionally we consider the national interest, such as at times of war.

The environmental crisis is on such a scale, that we now have to be able to shift from thinking not only what is best for me, to what is best for the planet and future generations. It is a huge shift in imagination and awareness, and can be difficult to maintain.

This shift in awareness was helped by the early picture of Earth from space, a blue and green jewel. For the first time we can see the whole of which we are a tiny part. Some features of our existence are random. For example, Earth is the “Goldilocks” planet, in part, simply due to our distance from the Sun, neither too hot, like Venus, nor too cold, like Mars, but “just right”.

The shift in awareness has also been helped by the Gaia hypothesis, proposed by James Lovelock. He suggests that life on Earth can be viewed not only at the level of millions of individuals and species, but as a whole, single organism, in which the inanimate geology, oceans and atmosphere interact with all life on Earth to maintain a life-supporting environment at a state of homeostasis. The ability of Gaia to achieve a degree of self-regulation accounts for the planet’s atmosphere being at a state of equilibrium that could not otherwise be supported. It also accounts for some of the teleological (as if by design) features of our environment, such as the salinity of the seas being within fairly narrow parameters within which life can survive, the part played by living organisms in the carbon, nitrogen, and sulphur cycles, and even the movement of the tectonic plates.

Once one starts to think in terms not of “What is best for me?” but “What is best for our Planet?” life takes on a whole new perspective, and everyday actions in our throwaway, high consumption, high pollution society, are open to fresh scrutiny.

It is this new perspective that leads away from the solely anthropogenic viewpoint to a more ecocentric one. A new balance is required in how we view the world that incorporates other species, and the life-supporting environment of our planet, rather than solely our immediate “wants”.

With this new awareness comes a sense of sadness at what we are doing to the world, and if we believe in God, to God’s Creation. Similarly for those who have looked to nature’s cycles to add meaning to our brief existence, there is a loss if we threaten life. In the words of Robinson Jeffers:
“The parts change and pass, or die, people and races and rocks and stars; none of these seems to be important in itself, but only in the whole.... It seems to me that this whole alone is worthy of a deeper sort of love; and that there is peace, freedom, I might say a kind of salvation...”

For those of us who live at the frenetic pace of the modern world, part of this revolution in awareness involves slowing down to the rhythms of nature, and expanding our awareness from the narrow “minimal self” that tends to dominate our materialistic, nihilistic age, to discover our “ecological self”, which considers the needs of other peoples and other species, and our small part in the global ecosystem. In exploring our

“ecological self”, Devall suggests that we need to break out of the barbed wire fence our ego has constructed, and realise our part in the greater whole. Once we become aware that we are part of a larger organism on whose health we depend, we are much more likely to vigorously defend parts of the biosphere. Our impact on the world is now so great that we are very much part of each others’ environment and deep ecology teaches us to tread more lightly on our planet. We have just as much a crisis of spirit, character and culture as an environmental crisis.

In “Simple in Means, Rich in Ends”, Bill Devall explores the practising of deep ecology and the discovery of this “ecological self”. The concept of deep ecology emerged from perceived short-comings in reform environmentalism, which seeks damage limitation rather than the radical shift in paradigm favoured by deep ecology. Reform environmentalism is seen as being too anthropocentric, and deep ecology seeks a complete leap in awareness and imagination, so that, in the words of Aldo Leopold we can “think like a mountain”.

Some of the constructive criticism from deep ecologists has meant that conservation groups have shifted from saving individual species, towards saving whole habitats.

We are part of an integrated whole, and if we destroy part of the Earth, we are destroying part of ourselves. Deep ecology questions the basic social and philosophical assumptions of industrial, urban life, and proposes that the natural world has intrinsic value, quite apart from any use, value, or meaning we may give it. The modern, materialistic world knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Deep ecology proposes voluntary simplicity with parallels to the Buddhist “middle way”, a balance between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-denial.

In this process of shifting viewpoint, it is important not to idealise nature, which can be random, brutal and can allow the strong to exploit the weak. Taking the ecocentric viewpoint to extremes can lead to an unhealthy misanthropy (dislike of people), and the distorted view that we are a pest, or even a cancer in terms of the harm our species has done to the planet. As David Ehrenfeld observes:

“Fortunately, there are human alternatives to the arrogance of humanism.”

A balanced new viewpoint is the second step in the Green Revolution, which recognises the potentially positive, symbiotic (mutually beneficial) aspects of our part in the life of Gaia, in our ability to prevent or mitigate certain disasters, as well as our ability to cause harm.

Step 3: The Green Revolution in Action

“When the Earth is sick and the animals have disappeared, there will come a tribe of people from all creeds, colours and cultures who believe in deeds not words, and who will restore the Earth to its former beauty. This tribe will be called the Warriors of the Rainbow.” Native American Indian prophecy.

Green politics borrows the best aspects from other political traditions and respectfully rejects those aspects which are incompatible with a Green future. These best aspects are then combined in a dynamic new synthesis which uses as its starting point a consideration of what is best for the planet as a whole. Green politics is about working together and finding the optimum consensus, rather than the divisive, confrontational politics of a two-party system. The Green Revolution avoids dogma and does not seek to blame for past mistakes when the realisation of our true situation was not known, but looks ahead. Green politics is neither right nor left-wing, but is positive and proactive. It is an entirely new way of doing politics, putting unity, generosity, open-mindedness, tolerance, loving, caring, realism and the ecological imperative at the heart of its philosophy.

From the Conservative the Green Revolution borrows the keeping of what is best about the past, literally conserving. This conserving will apply to resources, ancient sites and buildings, forests and habitats, cultures, languages, sports, music and art.

From the Liberal tradition, the Green Revolution borrows the freedom of expression and diversity of lifestyles that Liberal philosophy supports, and its belief in education as the way to release the potential talents we all have, its compromise between the free market and social concerns, its friendship and tolerance towards other races and cultures.

From the Socialist and Communist traditions, the Green Revolution borrows a desire for justice, fairer shares, co-operation and community, more equal opportunity, the building of a quality health and welfare system and good housing for all, and the caring for the weak and the elderly that is not unique to, but especially identified with this tradition.

From the Anarchist tradition the Green Revolution borrows the concepts of autonomy, empowerment of the individual rather than the slavish following of leaders, decentralisation, and self-sufficiency.

From the Nationalist traditions the Green Revolution cherishes cultural, ethnic, linguistic diversity that flourish with a degree of isolation, while seeking friendship between communities.

Greens should not have their heads in the clouds, consider themselves a vanguard or become beguiled by mysticism. Nor should Greens idealise nature. “Nature” is red in tooth and claw, and while there are many wonders in nature, it can be random, cruel, and

brutal, a place where the strong exploit the weak. There is an element of truth in the assertion that the struggle for civilization is a struggle against nature. All of the political traditions have much to learn from the others, and as one of the most recent, Green politics has the most to learn.

In many cases the Green Revolution will take the middle ground. Extremes tend to support the other, and a shift towards the centre can be more effective than merely acting as a counter-balance to what one seeks to change, causing the other extreme to also collapse towards the centre. Suddenly you are pushing against an open door instead of banging your head against a brick wall. At other times, desperate times call for radical, but well-considered and peaceful, measures.

In Green politics the emphasis is on prevention being better than cure, and where there is a problem, on looking at the root causes and tackling those, rather than wasting time, effort and resources patching up the symptoms in fire-fighting and crisis management. It requires lateral thinking, ingenuity, and new ways of working that harnesses the experience, creativity and talents of every person on the planet, rather than just an elite.

In terms of electoral activity, Green politics is represented by The Green Party, which has a unique perspective in that the starting point of its thinking is the ecological imperative. The Green Party has lacked real electoral success so far, since the majority of the population remain unconvinced of the ecological crisis. Its greatest success came when people reached a degree of awareness of series of disasters such as dying seals, the thinning ozone layer, toxic waste cargoes, and Chernobyl in late 1980s, which preceded the 15% vote for the Green Party in the 1989 European elections.

Awareness of the environmental crisis waned in the early 1990s, and there was even a backlash from vested interests and those who found it too painful to face up to the problems, and more convenient to scapegoat the messenger. The Green Party has also suffered from self-inflicted wounds over the dogmatic rejection of potential leaders.

The tragic reality is that with environmental crises like pollution, global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, and population growth, by the time the evidence of crisis is staring us in the face, it will be far too late to do anything about it, and the danger is that by the time The Green Party finally gains real popular support it will be a case of "We told you so, and goodbye." The only rational strategy for The Green Party is a radical, pro-active, and urgent approach. It needs to work with other political parties rather than attack them, seeking common ground not confrontation. It can only succeed if the vast majority of the population participate, or the sacrifices of a few will simply be swallowed up by the inaction of the majority.

There is something in the Green Revolution and The Green Party for everybody, whether they come from one of the older political traditions, or none of them. It is a Revolution that seeks to include everyone and rejects no-one who is willing to approach

the future with an open mind, in a spirit of generosity, reconciliation, and giving. It is sympathetic, and looks for the potential good in everyone.

Green is Local

“Think globally act locally”

“The first casualty of a move to a lower energy world would be transport, the most energy-intensive sector of all. Higher transport costs would allow small producers to re-emerge to use local resources to supply local markets. This would, in turn, create greater local, regional and national autonomy, reversing the concentration of economic power that has taken place in the last century. What a flowering of culture, communities and individuals there would be.” Richard Douthwaite, “The Growth Illusion”.

The Green Revolution is a local one. It aims to shift power and responsibility from the centre to the regions. To a large degree, the more decentralised, local and self-sufficient a society, the more secure its roots. The less people in a town travel away, the more they will know and rely on each other, the more they have an interest in their community’s future, and the more they will have in common. If people know each other, then reciprocal altruism flourishes, the old approach that one good turn deserves another. It is no coincidence that small, isolated island communities have tended to have a low crime rate. The knowledge of certain detection and social disgrace is a power deterrent. Conversely, the more strangers that pass through, the more reciprocity breaks down, the more scope for crime, as people literally escape from social obligations and responsibility. Large cities with transient populations will often have high crime rates for this reason.

The trend towards global travel has positive aspects, such as the sharing of cultures, the breaking down of barriers between nations, and holidays, but in many cases it has been a disaster for local communities and ecosystems. It is important to recognise close links between some environmental and social problems. In addition, air travel is a major contribution to global warming to the huge quantity of fossil fuel it consumes.

The green economy is a local one, in which to buy local produce is a political choice, keeping wealth locally. Many Greens support Local Employment and Trading Schemes (L.E.T.S), which are re-establishing local bartering schemes and local currencies, rather than giant transnational corporations. Greens support local shops rather than supermarkets. Moreover to grow your own, and to do your own cooking and baking, adds value at the local level, and removes power and money from the rapacious hand of big business. Small is beautiful. Greens aim to eat local produce in season, reducing “food miles” (the distance that food travels before it reaches your plate), local and global atmospheric and noise pollution, and the disruption caused to communities through which goods are transported around the world.

The trend towards a global, deregulated market and the opening of all communities to competition risks catastrophic social and environmental costs. In “Developed to Death” Ted Trainer defined the market in these terms: “A market economy is an ingenious device for ensuring that when things become scarce only the rich can get them.”

Without strict regulation a global market leads to the lowest common denominator in social and environmental standards, as costs are constantly cut to remain competitive, and investment and work chase around the globe in search of the cheapest workforce and the lowest standards of environmental protection. The hazards of the global market are analysed in “The New Protectionism” by Tim Lang and Colin Himes, who advocate a radical, positive new form of protectionism, based on the premise that cheaper is rarely best, and civilised values and delicate habitats need protecting, not exploiting. The golden rule is local production for local need.

The shift from international to local is not an easy one, and must be done in a cautious, incremental way to ensure that poor, vulnerable communities which have relied on exports have time to adapt, and receive support from wealthy powerful ones, to mutual benefit, for example in “debt for nature swaps.” It will be a painful and difficult to return to local communities in much of the developed world, where work, study and mobility have dislocated family, friends and generations. It need not be an absolute shift, but it needs to be made.

The Green Revolution recognises the need for some centralisation to allow for strategic planning, co-ordination, and proper regulation, but as a general rule favours decentralisation of power to the lowest level, to improve participation, responsibility, accountability and accessibility, and to make the unwieldy, stifling bureaucracy of government more responsive. Centralisation leads to apathy, and disempowerment.

The personal is political. It may seem that a small choice you make, like choosing to grow your own or buy local apples, rather than foreign ones, has little effect. But multiplied up by millions of people making similar choices, the effect is considerable. To work and produce locally, to buy locally, and to grow or make what you consume, and to get involved in local politics, is to empower yourself and the local community. Think globally, but act locally.

When less means more

“The Earth has enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed.” Gandhi

“When you have cut down the last tree, and polluted the last river, you will know you cannot eat money.” Northern American Indian saying.

“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Henry Thoreau.

The relevance of this section to the reader will depend on how you live, and your consumption of energy and material goods. To a pensioner shivering in a barely furnished flat, a beggar on the street, a family on a brutalised high-rise estate or to someone scraping a living in the “Third World”, exhortations to consume less are insulting.

While aware of the many exceptions, there is a broad continuum of lifestyles:

Minimal consumption/low impacthigh consumption/high environmental impact

The further to the right of this continuum you are, the greater the benefit if you join the Green Revolution to the Planet’s ecosystems, and ultimately to you, your friends and your family. Those of us with a high consumption lifestyle have most to gain because we have most to lose if the planet’s life-supporting ecosystems that support our lifestyle collapse. It is far easier to cut back now in a gradual, voluntary way, and still have those ecosystems in place, than to face starvation and degradation due to violent climatic change, confronted by famine, floods storms or deserts, when it is too late to change anything.

The reason that giving up some materialist trappings is not such a sacrifice is because there is a trade-off. They separate us from family, friends, real culture, traditions and nature. Material things can make us independent at the expense of community. Laundrettes, libraries, public transport, and live entertainment bring people together, unlike washing machines, personal stereos, cars and television. Moreover, if we consume less the less we need to earn, meaning we may not have to work quite so hard or such long hours. If some of our wealth goes to those in greatest need, there may be a reduction in discontent and crime. Everyone wins.

The Green Revolution does not mean giving up everything and wearing a hair shirt for the sake of it. It is not Luddite. It is just recognition that beyond a certain level, the cost of high consumption to you, to society, and to global ecosystems, is greater than the benefit, and that level is much lower than we have often been willing to recognise until disaster stares us in the face.

There is much more to protecting the environment than using unleaded petrol, CFC (chlorofluorocarbon)-free aerosols, and a different brand of washing power. The next step, in reducing our consumption may initially be a difficult and painful one, but it can be taken together with family and friends, supporting one another.

Greens should not be against technology itself, due to its capacity to reduce suffering, to ease hard labour, and save lives. It is the way technology is applied that is important. For example, with computer technology, there may be real benefits in having a few computers in each town. But when every household has to have one to avoid economic, educational or social disadvantage, there is such a combined environmental and social impact that technology may become a cost, not a benefit. As a general rule, the higher level of technology involved, the greater the assessment of social and environmental impact that is needed.

It is also the case that the more a society comes to rely on long "supply lines" and high technology, the further from a state of equilibrium it becomes, the more vulnerable it becomes to disruption. The most stable, secure society, is one that is self-sufficient, local, with fair distribution of resources and opportunity, which has achieved a compromise between co-operation and competition, and which is low-tech, but with access to and able to use high-technology when the need arises, without becoming dependent on it.

The Green Revolution starts small, but like a snowball rolling downhill, with everyone who joins it, from the subversive waste-watcher who switches off lights at work, to the person who sets a low consumption example to their neighbours, the further it rolls, the faster and bigger it gets.

Quality Matters

"Politicians have taken pride recently in leaving decisions to the market, with the result that market forces have shaped society rather than society shaping the market. This is the tail wagging the dog. We have forgotten that the people are the point of economic activity and behaved as if economic activity is the point of people." Richard Douthwaite, "The Growth Illusion".

"Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist." Kenneth Boulding, economist

Few of us ever take full responsibility in our everyday lives, because it is so difficult if taken seriously. It can be painful, and seem unfair to have to make any material sacrifice, when we have worked so hard for what we have got or if others don't seem to be trying. Walking or cycling instead of driving can be exhausting. Shopping at several small shops may take longer or cost more than the supermarket. Recycling can be tedious and dirty work. Achieving responsible, sustainable societies will not be easy, especially the initial push as we turn the corner, and before the structures of society adjust to make the Green Revolution easier. But like pushing a heavy load, once you build momentum, it gets easier.

We in the affluent societies have been responsible for the most terrible environmental damage to natural ecosystems. Often this damage has been "exported", by mining resources from other nations, or it is invisible, like radioactive waste, a cruel

legacy for future generations, or changing the atmosphere, thinning the ozone layer, or the unseen misery of sweatshop labour and pollution behind some of our consumer products. We also have some responsibility for the decimation and disruption of indigenous societies. In many cases our quality of life has been achieved at the expense of the weak or future generations.

This is not a popular message. In some cases the responsibility is mitigated by a degree of ignorance, disempowerment, or being shared with others, but it is still there. At the moment people blame politicians, politicians blame people, and the Earth suffers.

The ethos of mainstream economics has been “the more growth the better”, competition is better than co-operation and big is best. The idea that society’s well-being can be measured purely in monetary terms or Gross National Product has been challenged by many authors. In “Small is Beautiful”, Schumacher stated that what really matters is quality, not quantity, and Douthwaite’s “The Growth Illusion” is a good example of the same message, showing through the use of a set of criteria including health, leisure, happiness, education, family and community life, crime and pollution, that while we may be materially better off, real quality of life may have actually declined in Britain in recent decades. As Douthwaite observes:

“...Gross National Product only measures things which are bought and sold for cash, it ignores clean air, pure water, silence and natural beauty, self-respect and the value of relationships between people....”

While there is a place for competition, to motivate, innovate and provide incentives, co-operation often brings out as much of what is good in human nature as competition. What is needed is not one extreme or the other, but a synthesis based on a contingency approach, that matches the shifting demands of our environment to the situation, while at all times aiming to maintain the highest possible level of civilised, decent behaviour.

There are three ways of raising real living standards. One is to have more and more conventional economic growth, until like the culture growing in a petri dish, we pollute ourselves to death or starve. The second is to rely on technology to dig us out of our hole, which is rather like trying to pull oneself up by one’s bootstraps if the misapplication of technology has got us into the hole in the first place. The third way is to seek reduced consumption, control of pollution, only environmentally sustainable growth, and voluntary limits to our world’s population, to achieve a steady-state economy. Of these three alternatives, the third is the most secure and stable, yet demands the most from each of us.

Some of the limits that environmental responsibility imposes are emotive and controversial. One of these issues is population growth, highlighted in Paul Ehrlich’s “The Population Bomb”. Green need to be careful to respect views at both extremes, and to seek common ground. We need to recognise that there may be less suffering involved in some means of voluntarily limiting human numbers than if nature imposes equilibrium by starvation, disease and famine. There may be a balance between accepting the benefits

of improved health care, with concomitant reduced infant mortality and increased longevity, and a willingness to limit family size. Excessive population growth devalues human life, by increasing competition, and forcing wages and living standards down, producing smaller shares, less dignity and more pollution. As Garrett Hardin has commented, the optimum number of people is not as large as the maximum the Earth can support.

Until population growth is limited or even reversed through voluntary means, there is little chance of lasting progress and improving our quality of life in a responsible way, for otherwise there is a potentially bottomless pit of human need and suffering. In this debate it is vital that religious views are respected, and that we tolerate the view of other people and try to avoid extremes.

Another emotive and controversial area for Greens is animal welfare. Part of the Green Revolution is an awareness of the innate value and importance of other species and their quality of life, not just our own. It is also about reducing suffering. The limits we set on this issue are up to each individual, whether this means becoming a more caring omnivore, a vegetarian or a vegan, and it is again important that we all respect other views to our own, other cultures and traditions, and avoid stridency and extremes.

Diversity is a further aspect of quality. Both in human society and nature, diversity makes life more interesting. Diversity also provides the checks and balances that damp down oscillations, maintaining equilibrium. As soon as a niche is left vacant in a diverse, climax ecosystem, the more quickly it can be filled. In contrast monocultures are vulnerable to rampant disease and extinction as the variety of responses is reduced. It is in all our interests to ensure that diversity in ecosystems, species, and our societies is preserved.

The consequences of failing to achieve responsibility, sustainability, and diversity, are severe. This is clear in “Beyond the Limits” by Meadows, Meadows and Randers, where in all the computer models of our predicament, only tough, early action, and sacrifice, avoids catastrophic, overshoot collapse for society. By accepting responsibility for the environmental consequences of our actions now, we can achieve a stable, sustainable future, in which quality of life is preserved.

Putting it into practice

“The choppiest waters are at the turning of the tide” Teilhard de Chardin.

Words and principles are fine. Putting the Green Revolution into practice is more difficult. The practical steps to achieve the Green Revolution will be more demanding for some than for others. For the tribal people still living from the land, there is generally least change needed, for the poor there is least material sacrifice. For the jet-setting energy-hungry, high consumption, materialistic person, there is most to change, but also most to gain in terms of community, cultural and spiritual values. There is also support

from friends, since this is a revolution we make as one, together, carrying everyone, with no opposition, since we all ultimately have a common interest: survival.

Aim to make the change in your life in stages. Three years may be a fair average, although there is no fixed agenda. Try keeping a note of your starting point, in how many consumer goods and material possessions you have, in how much you buy, what percentage you recycle, how much rubbish you throw out, how many miles you drive, how much of your food comes from a supermarket rather than small local shops, how much of your own food you grow, how much you cook yourself, what percentage of your monthly income you donate to environmental groups. By charting your progress in this way, you gain a sense of achievement.

Putting the Green Revolution into action involves a comprehensive “environmental audit” of each area of our lives and considering its impact on the natural world, and how we can reduce any damage. The following is a summary of ideas to consider:

HOME

- Reduce, re-use, and recycle.
- Turn it down, leave it out, and switch it off! Reduce energy consumption in your home, for example by setting the thermostat a few degrees lower, and wearing warmer clothes (assuming you can afford adequate heating), turn off unwanted lights, improve insulation and draught-proofing, don't overfill the kettle, and fit low-energy light-bulbs.
- Consume less water. Showers use less than baths.
- Do you really need all the modern appliances? Try using a clothes line rather than a tumble drier, washing up rather than using a dish-washer.
- Cut down on ironing. No persuasion needed!
- Use environmentally-friendly cleaning products.
- Consider second-hand furniture.
- If you are thinking of a pet, be sure you can provide it with good surroundings.
- What do you give the man who has everything/Nothing but best wishes! Avoid trivial presents.
- Choose wood from sustainable sources and try to avoid any tropical hardwoods.
- Buy things that will last even if they cost a little more. You save in the long run.
- Choose a CFC-free, energy-efficient fridge, and if you dispose of one, make sure your Council extracts the CFC gases in the old fridge.
- Avoid paper towels. Use cloths instead.
- Do you really need a newspaper every day?
- Avoid aluminium foil. Its manufacture requires a lot of energy.
- Return junk mail prepaid envelopes to sender so they pay the postage. Better still, cancel it altogether, by writing to “The Mailing Preference”, Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ. Cancel any “free” newspapers.

FOOD

- Eat local food in season.
- Wholefoods are healthiest
- Avoid junk food, and excess fat, additives, flavourings, sugar and salt.
- Reduce rice consumption as it doesn't grow locally, and rice fields produce vast amounts of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.
- Reduce meat consumption. Quite apart from ethical or health reasons, cattle also produce massive amounts of methane.
- Most vegetable can be cooked together, saving energy.
- Support fair trade when choosing which food and beverages you buy.

PACKAGING

- Politely refuse plastic bags you do not need.
- Where there is a choice, pick the brand with least packaging.
- Recycle any packaging you cannot avoid.

CLOTHES

- Choose natural dyes, unbleached fibres, and natural materials like cotton and wool.
- Consider second-hand clothes.
- Use handkerchiefs rather than tissues.

CHILDREN

- "Terry's" nappies are arguably less environmentally damaging (but hard work unless you have a local laundry service.)
- Choose British-made toys when possible and avoid war games.
- Teach respect for other races, religions, cultures, and weaker, elderly or disabled people.
- Encourage co-operation as well as some competition.
- Support environmental projects at school.

HEALTH

- Prevention is better than cure.
- Consider natural or alternative remedies.
- Stress kills.
- Limit or avoid alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption.
- Use cruelty-free cosmetics if you need them at all.

GARDEN

- Grow your own organic food.
- Avoid peat and pesticides.
- Encourage wildlife.
- Compost your kitchen waste and garden refuse.

COUNTRYSIDE

- Take no more than a photo, leave no more than a footprint, kill nothing but time.
- Choose local holidays and appreciate what is near you.
- Expose yourself to nature!

TRANSPORT

- Is your journey necessary?
- Avoid air travel.
- Limit your use of the car.
- Walking or cycling is best.
- Go green, go public!

WORK AND MONEY

- If there is a choice, look for a local job.
- Lobby your Trade Union on environmental issues.
- Green your workplace. Suggest a bike pool and incentives to reduce car mileage.
- Consider green and ethical investments.
- Join your local L.E.T.S scheme, and if there isn't one start your own.
- Switch your bank to the Co-operative Bank, or another similar ethical firm.

CAMPAIGN

- Structural changes make individual change easier, so lobby politicians at all levels.
- Support boycotts of environmentally-damaging products, companies, or nations.

This is a list of ideas in brief. For a comprehensive guide, particularly recommended are Bernadette Vallely's "1001 Ways to Save the Planet" and John Button's "How to be Green".

As an example of putting ideas into action look at reducing your use of a car if you have one. In the first year, set yourself a target of reducing your household car mileage from say 15,000 to 12,000, the second year from 12,000 to 10,000, and in the

third year, from 10,000 to 8,000 or less. The more people who shift to public transport the better it becomes and the easier the shift. At the same time, write to your local Council, and local, national and European political representatives to demand traffic calming, cycle lanes and better public transport. (It is suggested that any system to encourage people to reduce their car mileage should be based on a locality-adjusted system of rationing, per person or per household, rather than a flat-rate carbon tax. It is not aimed to give the details of the ideal scheme here, except to comment that a flat-rate carbon tax may simply allow the wealthy to continue their present level of pollution while the real sacrifices are made by poorer people.)

Similar incremental targets can be set for reducing “Food Miles”, the overall amount one consumes, the percentage of waste recycled, one’s energy bill, and so on. Instead of being part of a throwaway culture, the values of thrift and economy are seen as virtues, and the motto is “Reduce, Re-use, Recycle”, in that order.

Some of these changes are difficult, particularly while the rest of society is in a transitional stage, but as the old sayings go, the longest journey starts with a single step, and a Revolution is not a Tea Party! There may be times when you wonder whether the initial sacrifices are worthwhile, or seems that they put you at a disadvantage, particularly when cutting down your consumption of material goods or your car mileage, or when using small, local shops and paying more, rather than use a supermarket, when others carry on regardless.

It is at these times you have to recognise the “Prisoner’s Dilemma”. To make initial change requires a sacrifice, but not to make the change is collective suicide. Someone has to make a start, and the more people who make the sacrifice and effort, the more support there is for each other, and the more pressure is applied to “backsliders”! There is good advice here from an unlikely source, Edwina Currie’s “A Parliamentary Affair”: “Give your love freely: you will always receive love in return – maybe not from the same person, and perhaps when you least expect it.” This is the motivation and theory behind the subversive hippy slogan: “Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty” or the less eloquent “What goes around comes around.” Although our planet is not a closed system, we really can ultimately benefit from sacrifice for and kindness towards others, just as we can suffer from our selfishness and cruelty than may, in the short-term, seem in our interest.

Adjusting the way we work and manage our finances is another powerful way of changing society. Local Employment and Trading Schemes (L.E.T.S) help to keep money locally and may Greens use the more ethical Co-operative bank rather than the High Street banks. The traditional banks have often made high interest loans to Third World countries which are then obliged to despoil their environment to meet repayments. We may also ensure, that if we have pensions, savings, or investments, that they are with firms that have strict ethical screening of where our money goes.

Putting the Green Revolution into action may also involve a reassessment of our life, particularly if we are trapped in the “work, buy consume, die” treadmill, or “metro,

boulot, dodo” as the French put it. An escape from the rate-race becomes more realistic if a return to “living locally” reduced travel and lowered levels of consumption lead to lower financial demands, less need to work such long hours, and more time with family and fiends, for getting in touch with nature, and what deep ecologist Bill Devall refers to as the ecological self, rather than our minimal self. Try to identify with the saying: “Earth my body, water my blood, air my breath, fire my spirit” (Anon). Slow down, think, walk, cycle, meditate, make your own bread, take up a traditional craft, get in touch with the seasons and nature, grow your own food, start to live rather than just exist.

As well as our individual effort, there is a simultaneous need for political change to promote incentives for environmentally benign alternatives, to build environmental costs into the equation, and to make structural changes to assist individuals who want to change their way of life. The alternative is the equivalent of the Cold War’s Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD): we all carry on consuming more and more, having large families, causing ever-increasing pollution, leading to ecocide after a brief binge for a minority of the Earth’s inhabitants.

In making these changes to our own lifestyles and to political structures, we need to make the changes together, to support each other, to exchange ideas, and to apply pressure. There is almost certainly a local branch of an environmental organisation such as Friends of the Earth, The Green Party, or Greenpeace in your local area, which needs your support and will welcome you.

So join us in the Green Revolution!

Conclusion

This has been a brief guide to the Green Revolution. It involves us all, it seeks to threaten or exclude no-one. It looks for the potential for good in everyone. It requires generosity and an open mind. It looks for root causes rather than tackling symptoms. It is peaceful but not passive.

The first step in the Green Revolution is to become aware of the environmental crisis, and to recognise the need for urgent action.

The second step is a revolution of awareness and how we view the world. It is a revolution not in the sense of a violent overthrow of the established order, but a turning around of how we think about ourselves and our place in the world. Its effects may be just as powerful as a traditional revolution, but with no victims and with no losers.

The final step is to put the Green Revolution into action. We have seen that the Green Revolution takes the best from the established political traditions and seeks to veer neither left nor right, but forward in a dynamic new consensus. It is a new way of doing politics, that seeks to avoid confrontation and opposition by involving everyone, and seeking “win-win” solutions. It must be a swift Revolution, but one which travels at the pace of the “slowest”, leaving no-one behind feeling bitter or rejected.

The local, self-sufficient community has been seen to be the most stable and secure, inhibiting crime and allowing reciprocal altruism to flourish, protecting the environment and raising social standards, not seeking isolation, never hostile, but self-reliant. The return from the international to a local community needs to be a gradual one in which the strong wealthy nations, help the weak in the transition, to mutual benefit.

Reduced consumption of material goods, energy, and new technology will mean some tough sacrifices in one part of our lives, but rewards in other areas. It is a journey we will make together, cheerfully cutting back with the “Joneses”, rather than struggling to keep up with them.

Setting limits to what we do and how we treat our Planet is the ultimate sign of responsibility, not just to each other, but to other species, to future generations, and to the cradle of Life. We have also seen how quality is as important as quantity, that diversity of life is a part of that quality, and serves to preserve equilibrium.

We have looked at putting the Green Revolution into practice, the most difficult but exciting part of the process, particularly if we tackle it together as friends, families and communities. We all have something to contribute. The jigsaw is incomplete until each and every one of us takes our place.

To open our eyes to the reality of our existence, to the miracle of life and nature, is to see the world again as a child does, not jaded, cynical, routine, mundane, and tedious, but vibrant, dynamic, sparkling, wonderful and new, like the sun rising on a crisp spring morning, with the leaves just bursting out of bud, into the early warmth of the sun after a long winter.

To live as part of nature, in harmony with it, is to be part of something much bigger than ourselves, not idealised, but the root of our existence and a provider of meaning in the struggle of our common humanity.

So join us in the Green Revolution, and build a better, Greener future!

Further Reading

The list below is a selection of the many books on environmental issues which are considered to be some of the best in achieving the three steps in the Green Revolution. It is not suggested that anyone needs to read or own them all, however some of them should be available at your local library.

Step 1: Recognising the Crisis

“**Beyond the Limits**”, Meadows, Meadows and Randers, Earthscan. This chilling book, the sequel to “The Limits to Growth”, is guaranteed to shake you out of any apathy or

complacency on environmental issues. Excellent computer modelling and graphics to highlight the state we are in and possible outcomes of all scenarios. Most end in overshoot and collapse. Only those involving early, radical action avoid catastrophe.

“**The End of Nature**”, Bill McKibben, Viking/Penguin. Accessible and powerful polemic on the tragedy of the end of nature and the folly of modern man, which brings home the fact that we have reached a point of no return, largely unaware of the threshold that has been crossed, and without sensible debate.

“**Our Common Future**”, The World Commission on Environment and Development, Oxford University Press. The influential report of a United Nations Commission on the need to introduce ecological concepts into economic theory.

“**The Hole in the Sky**”, John Gribbin, Corgi. A good account of the story and science behind the discovery of ozone depletion.

“**Global Warming – The Greenpeace Report**”, Oxford University Press. A comprehensive study of the science behind global warming, its likely effects, and how to limit them.

“**The Greenhouse Effect**”, Stewart Boyle and John Ardill, New English Library/Hodder and Stoughton. One of the first and most accessible accounts of the science involved in global warming.

“**Turning up the Heat**”, Fred Pearce, The Bodley Head. Another good source on global warming.

“**Hothouse Earth – The Greenhouse Effect and Gaia**”, John Gribbin, Bantam Press. Slight more far-reaching than other books on global warming in linking it to the Gaia theory.

“**Earth in the Balance**”, Al Gore, Earthscan. Excellent reading but disappointing that Gore put so little of his insight into practice.

“**State of the World**” (Annual Report), Earthscan. Report on major environmental issues in the form of essays by leading figures.

“**A Year in the Green House**”, John Elkington, Gollancz. Elkington was co-author of “The Green Consumer Guide”, and this is his lively account of the end of the 1980s, when the green pulse of the nation quickened and he became caught up in the brief feeding frenzy of the media on what was then the big new idea.

“**The Greenpeace Book of the Nuclear Age – The Hidden History of the Human Cost**”, John May, Gollancz. Disturbing account of the real costs of nuclear power.

“The Fate of the Forest”, Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn, Penguin. A detailed history of the forces of ecology, economics and greed that have shaped the Amazon.

“The Burning Season”, Andrew Revkin, Collins. The story of Chico Mendes, Brazilian rubber-tapper and environmentalist, who was assassinated by ranchers in 1988, in the context of the greatest reservoir of biological diversity on earth.

“In the Rainforest”, Catherine Caufield, Picador. A detailed study of the world’s rainforests and their people.

“Global Dumping Ground”, The Centre for Investigative Reporting and Bill Moyers, The Lutterworth Press. A chilling investigation into the trade in toxic waste, and corruption, greed and exploitation.

Step 2: The Revolution in Awareness

“Gaia- A New Look at Life on Earth”, James Lovelock, Oxford University press. Lovelock sets out the background that led to his Gaia theory, the idea that life on Earth functions as a single organism, which is a major catalyst in the revolution in environmental awareness.

“The Ages of Gaia”, James Lovelock, Oxford University Pres. A fascinating account of the evolution of Gaia in geophysical terms.

“Gaia - The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine”, James Lovelock, Gaia Books. A planetary medical check-up on the health of Gaia.

“The Gaia Atlas of Planet Management” edited by Norman Myers, Gaia Books. Builds on James Lovelock’s concept to analyse environmental problems in a Gaian context. Recommended.

“Entropy – A New World View”, Jeremy Rifkin with Ted Howard, Paladin. A good introduction to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and its implications for the environment, for example in the folly of excessive “Food Miles”, and the limits to recycling.

“Simple in Means, Rich in Ends”, Bill Devall, Green Print. A good introduction to the thinking behind deep ecology, and how to apply some of it in practice.

“Small is Beautiful”, E.F. Schumacher, Abacus Books. One of the first books to challenge the concept that big is always best, and influential in shaping the green movement.

“It Doesn’t Have to be Like This”, David Icke, Green Print. Easy reading and a good introduction to Green Party thinking.

“**The Coming of the Greens**”, Jonathon Porritt and David Winner, Fontana. An excellent overview of the wave of green influence at the end of the 1980s.

“**The Selfish Gene**”, Richard Dawkins, Oxford University Press. Controversial yet fascinating. Looks at life from the level of the gene, human motivation, the far-reaching influence of our biological drives, with a good study of the “Prisoner’s Dilemma” and “Game Theory”.

“**The Blind Watchmaker**”, Richard Dawkins, Longman. Another controversial book from Dawkins which highlights the role of chance in our evolution. Useful in reminding us of our contingency on a life-supporting environment which is not permanent or fixed.

“**The Illustrated Origin of the Species**”, Charles Darwin, Faber and Faber. An illustrated version of Darwin’s classic which shaped much of modern scientific thinking and our place in it.

“**Ecology as Politics**”, Andre Gorz, Pluto Press. An early account of the role of the environment in politics of the future.

“**Western Civilization in Biological Perspective**”, Stephen Boyden, Oxford University Press. Interesting for the fact that it considers human history in a wider context.

“**A Green History of the World**”, Clive Ponting, Penguin. Packed with facts and figures, it studies history from a less anthropocentric viewpoint, with dire examples of civilisations that exhausted their resource base.

“**The Growth Illusion**”, Richard Douthwaite, Resurgence/Green Books. A highly recommended critique of the notion that growth is good with the use of criteria to measure real quality of life.

“**Bringing the Economy Home from the Market**”, Ross V.G. Dobson, Black Rose Books. A study of the contemporary and historical process by which local communities and individuals have become dependent on the global market economy, and ideas for how this process can be reversed to rebuild local communities.

“**Economic Policy Towards the Environment**”, Edited by Dieter Helm, Blackwell. A detailed and technical series of articles on the links between the environment and the economy.

“**Blueprint for a Green Economy**”, Pearce, Markandya and Barbier, Earthscan. Some of the formulas are complex, but this is one of the most influential efforts to incorporate environmental costs into conventional economic theory.

“**The New Protectionism – Protecting the Future Against Free Trade**”, Tim Lang and Colin Hines, Earthscan. A damning indictment of the environmental and social harm caused by the global market.

“Environmentalism and Political Theory”, Robyn Eckersley, UCL Press. Examines various strands of green political thought, coming out in favour of the ecocentric approach.

Step 3: The Green Revolution in Action

“How to be Green”, John Button, Century Hutchinson Ltd. One of the most sensible books on how to put environmental theory and concerns into practice in our everyday lives.

“1001 Ways to Save the Planet”, Bernadette Vallely, Penguin. Packed with easy ideas for putting green thinking into practice in our everyday lives. Recommended.

“The Green Consumer Guide”, John Elkington and Julia Hailes. Gollancz. This book caught the mood of the late 1980s, when the public wanted to know more about supply chains and environmental audits.

“LETSWORK – Rebuilding the Local Economy” Peter Lang, Grover Books. A guide to how to set up and run a Local Employment and Trading Scheme. Recommended.

“After the Crash”, Guy Dauncey, Green Print. A look at the alternative rainbow economy that may replace the traditional one if the global economy comes unstuck.

“Environmental Law and Citizen Action,” Alan Murdie, Earthscan. How to use legislation to campaign effectively.

General

“Save the Earth”, edited by Jonathon Porritt, Dorling Kindersley. A lavish book on the environmental crisis, with many contributions from celebrities.

Reference

“Green Pages”, John Button, Optima. A superb directory of natural products, services, resources and ideas.

“Directory for the Environment”, Monica Frish, Green Print. A directory of environmental groups, campaigns, and initiatives.

“The Green Index”, Environmental Information Bureau, Cassell Ltd. A comprehensive listing of environmental organisations in Britain and Ireland.

Magazines

The Ecologist, Unit 18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ
Tel: +44 (0)20 7351 3578 Fax: +44 (0)20 7351 3617 subscription enquiries.

Tel: 01795 414 963 Email: theecologist@galleon.co.uk <http://www.theecologist.co.uk>

The New Internationalist – Subscription enquiries:
Tower House, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough LE16 9EF
phone: 01858-438896 **fax:** 01858-461739
e-mail: newint@subscription.co.uk <http://www.newint.org/>

Resurgence

Ford House, Hartland, Bideford, Devon, EX39 6EE, U.K.
Tel: +44 (0) 1237 441293 Fax: +44 (0) 1237 441203
"info@resurgence.org" <http://www.resurgence.org/>

The Green Network

The following list is a selection from the many environmental and social organizations and contacts in Britain, and it is intended to be a starting point for anyone newly interested in the environment rather than a comprehensive listing;

The Association for the Conservation of Energy (ACE), Westgate House, Prebend Street, London. N1 8PT General Enquiries: info@ukace.org Tel: +44 (020) 7359 8000

Fax: +44 (020) 7359 0863 <http://www.ukace.org> Campaigns on energy conservation issues.

Amnesty International, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA. Tel. +44 20 7033 1500. Campaigns for human rights around the world.

www.amnesty.org.uk.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), Conservation Centre, 163 Balby Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire. DN4 0RH Tel: 01302 572 244 Fax: 01302 310 167 Information@btcv.org.uk <http://www.btcv.org>

The Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) 11 Goodwin Street, Finsbury Park, London N4 3HQ. For all telephone enquiries call: +44-(0)-20 72810297. To fax: +44-(0)-20 72814369. enquiries@caat.org.uk. <http://www.caat.org.uk>

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ Tel: 020 7700 2393 Fax: 020 7700 2357
Email: enquiries@cnduk.org **Website:** www.cnduk.org

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT), Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9AZ, UK
General Enquiries: +44 (0)1654 705950 A living exhibition of green ideas in action, and
a great day out. <http://www.cat.org.uk>

Compassion in World Farming, CIWF, Charles House, 5a Charles Street, Petersfield,
Hampshire GU32 3EH United Kingdom Tel. 00 44 (0) 1730 264 208
<http://www.ciwf.org.uk/>

The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP
customerservice@co-operativebank.co.uk. <http://www.co-operativebank.co.uk> The
leading ethical bank.

Cyclists Touring Club, 69 Meadow, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3HS
Tel : 0870 873 0060 Fax : 0870 873 0064 Email : cycling@ctc.org.uk
<http://www.ctc.org.uk/>

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), Information Resource
Centre, Lower Ground Floor, Ergon House, c/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk <http://www.defra.gov.uk>

Eco, 98 Crane Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2QD. Tel 07725 147 626. The online
newspaper covering environmental issues.

webmaster@ecozine.co.uk www.ecozine.co.uk

The Ecology Building Society, 7 Belton Road, Silsden, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20
0EE phone: 0845 674 5566 fax: 01535 650780
email: info@ecology.co.uk www.ecology.co.uk

The Environmental Transport Association (ETA), 68 High Street, Weybridge, Surrey
KT13 8RS. Tel. 0800 212 810. www.eta.co.uk eta@eta.co.uk Campaigns for greener
transport, and provides breakdown service with good rates for low mileage drivers.

Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ. For information about Friends of the Earth campaigns or any other environmental issue, phone the Information Service tel. 0808 800 1111. For all other enquiries (including membership and publications requests) Tel: 020 7490 1555
<http://www.foe.co.uk/> info@foe.co.uk

Greenpeace UK , Canonbury Villas, London, N1 2PN Tel: 020 7865 8100
<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk> info@uk.greenpeace.org The leading peaceful direct action group.

The Green Party UK, 1a Waterlow Road, London, N19 5NJ
Tel: 020 7272 4474 Fax: 020 7272 6653
Email: office@greenparty.org.uk <http://www.greenparty.org.uk/>

The Green Information and Advice Agency (G.A.I.A), P.O. Box 3865, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire BA15 5AA tel. 07725 147 626 Links to environmental groups and advice on green issues.

www.gaiaworld.org Email: webmaster@gaiaworld.org

The National Trust, P.O. Box 39, Warrington WA5 7WD. Tel. 0870 458 4000
enquiries@thenationaltrust.org.uk <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>

Oxfam, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2JY
Tel. 0870 333 2700 <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>

Population Concern 178-202 Great Portland Street London W1N 5TB Phone: 0171 631 1546 Fax: 0171 436 2143 ... info@populationconcern.org.uk
<http://www.populationconcern.org.uk>

Survival, 6 Charterhouse Buildings, London EC1M 7ET
T 00 44 20 7687 8700 F 00 44 20 7687 8701
info@survival-international.org <http://www.survival-international.org>

Sustrans, 2 Cathedral Square, College Green, Bristol BS1 5DD.
Tel: 0117 926 8893 Fax: 0117 929 4173

info@sustrans.org.uk <http://www.sustrans.org.uk>

The Worldwide Fund for Nature, (WWF), Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming,
Surrey GU7 1XR tel: 01483 426444

<http://www.wwf.org.uk>