The Green Breakthrough of 1989: meaning, significance and legacy

edited by
James McKay and Jean-Francois Mouhot

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The Green Breakthrough of 1989: meaning, significance and legacy

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Paper by James McKay and Jean-Francois Mouhot
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Introductory Paper

James McKay and Jean-Francois Mouhot[1]

Background

The British environmental movement, as we know it today, largely emerged from three successive waves of organisational growth.[2] The late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the formation of groups principally concerned with protection and preservation, such as the Commons, Footpaths and Open Spaces Society (1865), the National Trust (1895), and the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (now the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts) (1912). Socially elite, these groups typically sought to protect Britain's countryside and built heritage from the perceived ravages of industrialisation and urbanisation, and drew on broader cultural influences from romanticism to the arts and crafts movement. Similarly, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (est. 1889), initially formed to fight the fashion industry's demand for rare birds' plumage, can be read as an attempt to protect nature from the intrusions of modernity.

During the inter-war period, protection and preservation of the rare and beautiful was complemented by a focus on more everyday amenity. As motor-cars and the developing transport infrastructure opened up the countryside, its socially elite guardians in the early environmental movement were joined in turn by planners and urban designers from the professional middle-classes (Council for the Preservation of Rural England, 1926) and those seeking to secure the countryside's leisure and amenity function for the working population (Ramblers' Association, 1935).

Until the mid twentieth century, then, Britain's environmental movement was predominantly focused upon preservation and amenity issues in the local and the national spheres. The third great wave of environmental organisations, most of which were formed in the dozen years between the Torrey Canyon oil spill (1967) and the Three Mile Island accident (1979), broadened the scope of the environmental movement to encompass global questions of population, resource use and degradation. While many of these groups were formed in Britain (Conservation Society, 1966; People (later the Green party), 1973; the Green Alliance, 1978), others were North American imports, with Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace establishing their UK arms in 1971 and 1977 respectively.

The new perspectives promoted by third-wave groups were explored through a range of high-profile publications. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) explored pesticide contamination of the food chain; Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1971) highlighted the neo-Malthusian strain within the third-wave, while its scepticism towards orthodox economics and the use of finite resources was set out in both the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* (1972) and the Ecologist magazine's *Blueprint for Survival* (1972); Fritz Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful: A study of economics as if people mattered* (1973) became a seminal text for the fields of environmentalism and development, and a bridge between the two, while James Lovelock's *Gaia* (1979) presented a quasi-religious perspective of the biosphere as a single, self-regulating entity. Whilst it would be crude to characterise older environmental groups as socially conservative, at the time of their formation the third-wave groups were

1 This chapter emerged out of the work of the Leverhulme-funded NGOs in Britain project at the University of Birmingham (www.ngo.bham.ac.uk), Grant number F00094AV, Principal Investigator Prof. Matthew Hilton. The convenors would like to thank the Leverhulme Trust for their support.

2 The typology used here draws upon the work of Christopher Rootes. See C. Rootes, 'Environmental NGOs and the Environmental Movement in England', in N. Crowson, M. Hilton & J. McKay (eds.), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state actors in society and politics since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp.201-221.

more distinctively radical than their more established peers, drawing from the counter-culture and middle-class radicalism of the post-war decades, and emerging, in at least one case, directly from the Labour movement (Transport 2000 (now Campaign for Better Transport), 1973).

The global perspective of the third-wave, if not its more radical philosophy, was foreshadowed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (1961), initially conceived as a fund-raising device for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

By the 1980s, therefore, the British environmental movement was diverse, broad-based, and long-established, with a membership that stretched back more than a century. It was well-placed to take advantage of the opportunities the 1980s would offer.

The Green break-through

During the 1980s, a series of factors acted upon each other to drive the environment up the political agenda: environmental problems and disasters were given prominent coverage by an increasingly interested media, leading politicians to respond with initiatives and rhetoric, which in turn further encouraged the media to treat 'the environment' as an issue of the day.

Environmental problems seemed to grow and accumulate quickly during the 1980s. Issues such as the chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) threat to the ozone layer, sulphur-emissions leading to acid rain, and, increasingly, what was then referred to as the greenhouse effect - all were widely reported, and gave credence to the globalised perspective of the third-wave groups. At the same time, disasters such as Bhopal (1984) and Chernobyl (1986) warned of the dangers inherent in industrial 'progress', while Britain's Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) epidemic renewed concerns surrounding intensive farming techniques. As the greenhouse effect was gradually developing into its current hegemonic position in environmental debate, a series of more specific problems also supplied the media with constantly varied copy: 1988 saw both the *Karin B* incident, and Phocine distemper virus (PDV) kill half of Britain's seal population, while the selection of planet Earth as *Time* magazine's 'person of the year' highlighted the threat to biodiversity. James Hansen's testimony to US Congress, meanwhile, was a landmark in the developing concern around the greenhouse effect. The following year came the catastrophic *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

Impressive though the above list is (even more so for being partial), the existence of environmental problems could arguably be demonstrated for any period in history. What distinguished the 1980s in terms of the wider public consciousness was not so much what happened, but that what happened was so widely reported and echoed by 'mainstream' media and politics. Specialist environmental correspondents began to be taken on by national titles, such as Geoffrey Lean at the *Observer*, and Charles Clover at the *Daily Telegraph*, as the issue established itself on the news agenda. (They would later be joined by journalists such as Nicholas Schoon at the *Independent*, and John Vidal at the *Guardian*.)

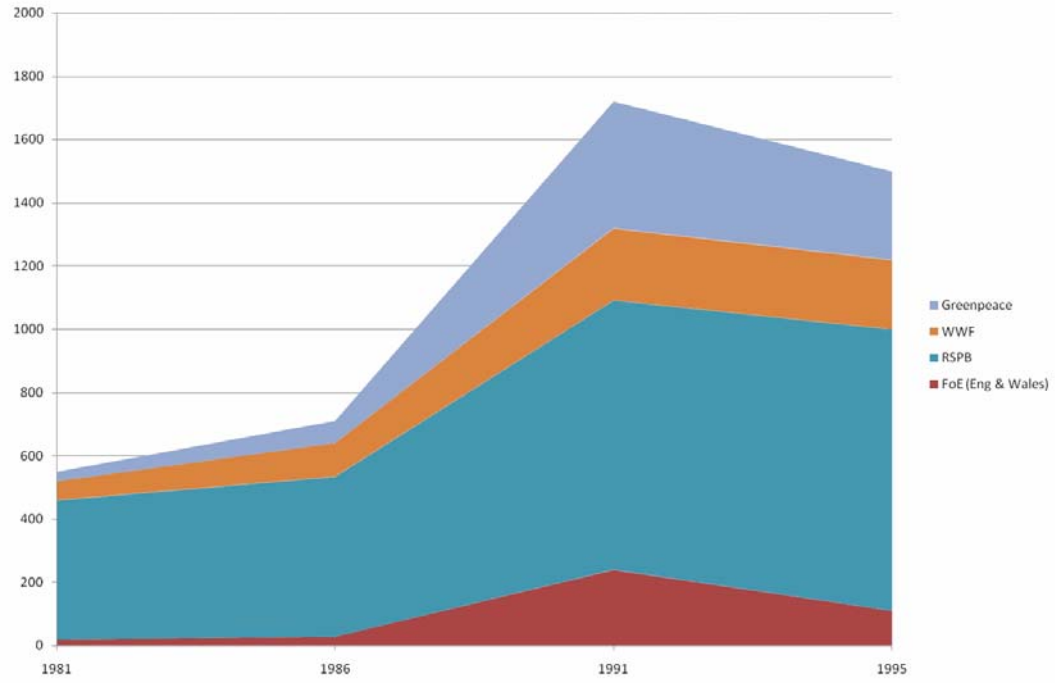
Politicians and policy-makers quickly responded. The main parties began issuing environmental policy statements, while the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (1987), championed the theoretical compatibility between economic growth and long-term environmental protection, with the notion of sustainable development. A high-point in Britain was the publication of 1990's *This Common Inheritance*, the first white paper on the environment, and the culmination of a long campaign, led by the Green Alliance. The most high-profile intervention, however, came from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in a series of speeches she made on the environment during 1988-89. Most famously, she used a lecture at the Royal Society to argue that action on environmental problems was 'one of the great challenges of the late Twentieth Century', upon which continued economic growth would depend.[3] Once again, the significance of the speech came not through its actual content, but its effect in the media-polit-

3 Margaret Thatcher, Speech to the Royal Society, 27 Sept 1988, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107346, accessed 4 Feb 2009.

ical echo-chamber. As Tom Burke of the Green Alliance argued at the time, 'the loop of that magic circle whereby the media only cover what politicians are interested in and politicians are only interested in that which the media will cover has now closed firmly around the environment.'[4]

Within this context, the groups that made up the environmental movement both proliferated and grew at a startling rate, countering the declining membership trends seen in other associational groups (see figure 1).[5]

Figure 1: Membership of Greenpeace, WWF, RSPB and Friends of the Earth, 1981-1995



Source: Annual reports, various years, organisations concerned.

As the NGOs attracted more and more members, so their financial strength grew through the 1980s, peaking around the turn of the decade (see figure 1). Fuelled by this financial expansion, staffing levels rose dramatically in the NGOs. Friends of the Earth, for example, had 17 staff members in 1982, but 128 a decade later.[6] Finally, and perhaps most spectacularly, came the performance of the Green party in the 1989 elections to the European parliament. Although it is dangerous to draw firm conclusions from the results of an electoral contest to which the British voting public attach relatively little significance, their 15% share of the vote was at the time perceived as a breakthrough for the party, as they displaced the Liberal Democrats to come third in national vote share.

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4 Green Alliance Mss: Tom Burke, 'Anno Viridis – The Green Revolution in Britain', 1989, Box: 1989. Green Alliance, London.

5 P. Hall, 'Social Capital in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 29, 3, 1999, pp.417-61.

6 Annual Reports, Friends of the Earth Ltd (Company No. 01012357) and Friends of the Earth Trust Ltd (Company No. 01533942), Companies House.

It is tempting to attribute this growth to levels of demand: citizens, alarmed by the rising number of media reports of environmental problems, turn to membership of environmental NGOs as a way of expressing their concern, and making a practical if small, contribution to the solution. While this explanation no doubt contains some truth, it neglects the supply-side of NGO growth – that, during the 1980s, environmental groups adopted increasingly sophisticated marketing and public relations strategies, recruiting (and being funded by) a largely passive supporter-base, and thereby developing themselves as 'protest businesses'.[7] Key here was the direct-mail marketing strategy, advertising membership to those with a probable latent sympathy towards environmental causes, perhaps by virtue of their membership of targeted demographic groups, or their history as purchasers of increasingly extensive NGO merchandising operations. NGOs including Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and CPRE all adopted this technique in the late 1980s, which came alongside a trend towards the centralisation of membership records, and a more general awareness of the need to project a positive image to potential recruits.

Break-through to bust, 1990s

Perhaps even more remarkable than this growth of the environmental movement, however, is how boom turned to bust almost immediately afterwards. According to World Values Survey data, 5.9% of the UK population declared they belonged to conservation/environment groups in 1990, declining to just 1.5% at the end of the decade.[8] The early 1990s was undoubtedly a period of real decline (or at least stagnation) for a number of environmental groups, particularly amongst those born in the 1960s and 1970s. This can be seen in both membership figures (problematic sources at the best of times), and more transparently in levels of income. This fall in income was also reflected in a large number of redundancies in the early 1990s in the affected organisations. Clearly, the broader economic situation played an important role here. NGOs found that people had far less discretionary income with which to express their environmental solidarity, making it in turn harder for groups to pursue the expensive marketing strategies that had hitherto fuelled NGO expansion. As the *Economist* magazine remarked at the time, 'Thank you, green movement, for showing everybody the problem in the mirror. See you in the next boom.'[9]

Such an explanation for decline would complement persuasive theories explaining the popularity of green movement in terms of post-war affluence.[10] However, economic determinism can only take us so far. Also, in the early 1990s, Tom Burke's magic-circle of media coverage, discussed above, began to disintegrate. Just as environmental NGOs were laying off staff, so newspapers began to lay off their specialist environmental correspondents, and the issue's political saliency began to fade, even allowing for the coverage given to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 (see figure 2).[11] Stagnation and decline could also be explained in terms of simple organisational inertia – success in the different world of the 1980s was necessarily followed by a period of retrenchment and renewal. But there was also a sense of the agenda moving on. In the early 1990s media coverage, always motivated by novelty, was more likely to concentrate upon the new breed of direct action protestors than the established NGOs, a problem exacerbated by the fact that groups such as Friends of the Earth were initially hostile to their more radical allies.[12] Although rapprochement and effective co-operation did follow (notably during the successful campaign to save south-east

7 G. Jordan, and W. Maloney, *The Protest Business: Mobilizing Campaign Groups* (Manchester, 1997).

8 The decline is probably even greater than these figures suggest, and the 2000 question included animal rights groups as well (source: World Values Survey: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org).

9 *Economist* editorial, 'Green Storm Falling', Economist, 8 Dec 1990, p.18.

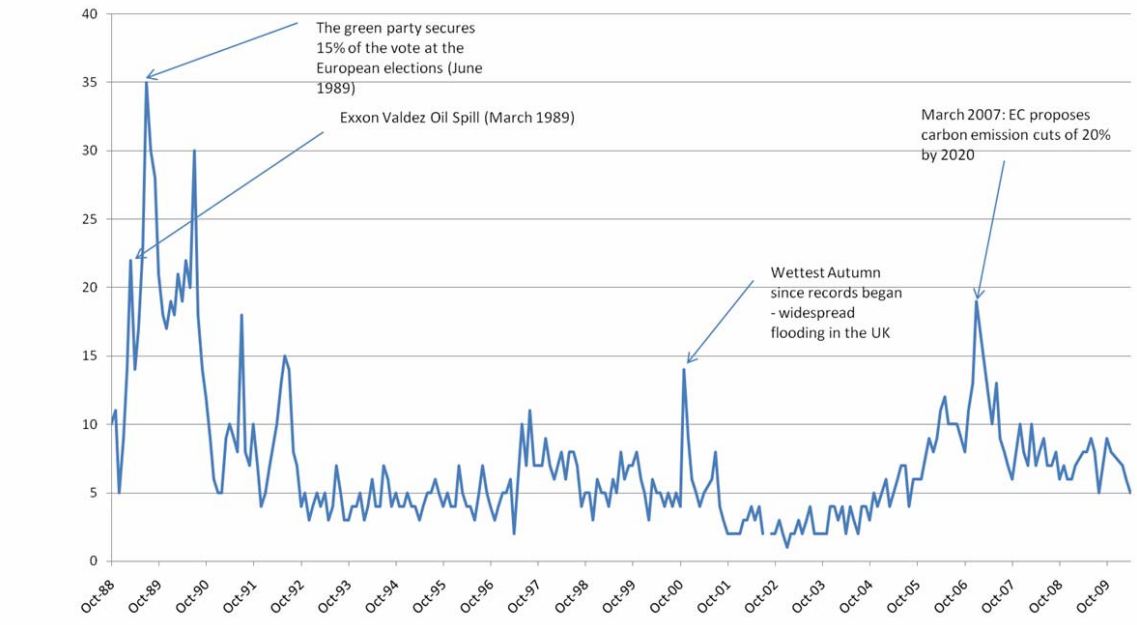
10 F. Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester, 1968); R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*, (Princeton, NJ, 1977).

11 P. Rawcliffe, *Environmental Pressure Groups in Transition* (Manchester, 1998), pp.66-7.

12 R. Lamb, *Promising the Earth* (London, 1996), pp.6-7.

London's Oxleas Wood from the threat of the planned Thames river crossing in the mid-1990s), the direct action protesters formed a clear and dramatic break from the third wave groups, significantly more radical in terms of philosophy and approach than they had been, even at their inception. While the direct action groups were tiny compared to the established NGOs, their prominence in these years should nevertheless be seen as a highly significant development for the environmental movement as a whole.

Figure 2: MORI Polling: Most Important Issues Facing Britain, 1988-2009



Source: IPSOS-Mori Issues Index

International considerations

Finally, when considering this topic, it is important not to focus too greatly on specific national explanations. The green breakthrough, and the subsequent bust, took place internationally. In France, the Green vote shot up at the 1989 elections, went slightly down at the 1993 elections, before collapsing at the 1994 and 1995 elections. The phenomenon is even more visible in Italy, where the two green lists at the European elections gave the green vote its highest score ever at any elections in the peninsula. It is less visible in German voting patterns, but Germany did experience a fall in the number of supporters of Greenpeace from 750,000 in 1990/1991 to 517,000 in 1995.[13] The decline of the press coverage of environmental issues has also been noted by many scholars in Germany.[14] The trough was also noticeable elsewhere in Europe, especially in Central and Eastern European countries where 'the 1990–99 time trends show a marked drop in environmental group membership in many of these former communist nations'.[15] At the European Union

13 W.T. Markham, *Environmental Organizations in Modern Germany: Hardy Survivors in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (2008), p.240.

14 For further detail, see Markham, *Environmental Organizations in Modern Germany*, pp.166-7.

level, this retreat of the green vote after 1989 (and before 1999) can be seen in the declining proportion of Green MEPs in European Parliament. In the US, membership figures of environmental organisations also show a familiar decline in the early 1990s, while finances hit a plateau.[16] Environmental ideas generally seem also to have retreated: 'In 1998, a Lou Harris poll found that 97 percent of Americans believed that more should be done to protect the environment; five years later, as small-donor contributions decreased sharply, the same question received an 82 percent response.'[17] Its repetition across the globe demonstrates that the Greenrush is a phenomenon worthy of serious analysis. It is to this analysis that we now turn.

15 R. Dalton, 'The greening of the globe? Cross-national levels of environmental group membership', *Environmental Politics* 14, 4, 2005, pp.441-459.

16 C. Bosso, *Environment, Inc.: From Grassroots to Beltway* (Lawrence, KS, 2005), p. 56.

17 M. Dowie, *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), p.4.

Chronology

1824 Formation of Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (later RSPCA)

1853 Smoke Nuisance Abatement Act

1859 Publication of Darwin's *On the Origins of the Species*

1863 Alkali Act

1865 Formation of Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society

1891 Formation of Society for the Protection of Birds (later RSPB)

1895 Formation of National Trust

1900 Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa

1903 Formation of Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (Later Flora and Fauna International)

1912 Formation of Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (later Wildlife Trusts)

1926 Formation of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE), followed by similar bodies in Scotland and Wales

1932 Kinder Scout trespass

1935 Formation of Ramblers' Association

1936 Formation of Standing Committee on National Parks (later Council for National Parks) by voluntary associations

1957 Windscale fire

1958 Formation of Council of Nature as umbrella body for conservation sector (closed 1980)
Opening of Britain's first stretch of motorway, Preston Bypass (now part of M6)

1961 Formation of WWF

1962 Publication of Carson's *Silent Spring*
Height of Thalidomide scandal

1963 Publication of Department of Transport's Buchanan Report, *Traffic in Towns*

1966 Formation of Conservation Society

1967 *Torrey Canyon* oil spillage (leading to the establishment of Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP), 1969)

1968 Publication of Hardin's 'The Tragedy of the Commons' in *Science*

1969 Formation of CoEnCo as umbrella body, an outcome of *The Countryside in 1970* conferences

1970 Earth Day, USA
European Conservation Year (EYC)

Publication of *The Protection of the Environment: The Fight Against Pollution*, Cmnd 4373
Launch of *Ecologist* magazine
Establishment of the UK's Department of the Environment

1971 Establishment of Friends of the Earth in the UK
Launch of UNESCO's *Man and the Biosphere* programme
UK publication of Ehrlich's *Population Bomb*
Publication of RCEP's first report

1972 Publication of Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth*, Ecologist magazine's *Blueprint for Survival*, and Ward & Dubos' *Only One Earth*

1973 Formation of People (later Ecology party, later Green party), and Socialist Environmental Resource Association (SERA)
Publication of Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*
Launch of EEC's first Environmental Action Programme

1977 Formation of Conservative Ecology Group, and Liberal Ecology Group

1979 Three Mile Island nuclear accident
Publication of Lovelock's *Gaia*

1980 Formation of Die Grünen (West Germany), and Wildlife Link
Launch of IUCN's World Conservation Strategy
Publication of *Global 2000 Report to the President*

1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act

1984 Bhopal disaster

1985 Transport Act paves way for the deregulation of bus services

1986 Chernobyl disaster

1987 Publication of World Commission on Environment and Development's *Our Common Future* (the Brundtland report)

1988 *Karin B* incident
Phocine distemper virus (PDV) kills half of Britain's seal population
Testimony of James Hansen to US Congress on climate change
Speeches of Margaret Thatcher to the Royal Society and Conservative Party Conference
Friends of the Earth launches its first direct mail campaign
Publication of Elkington & Hailes' *Green Consumer Guide*

1989 Department of Transport's *National Road Traffic Forecasts* predict rises of 82-142% by 2025.
Publication of Department of Transport's *Roads to Prosperity* White Paper
Exxon Valdez oil spill, Alaska
Speech of Margaret Thatcher to the UN General Assembly

1990 Publication of first Environment White Paper, *This Common Inheritance*, Cmnd 1200; Labour and the Liberals follow with similar statements

1991 Establishment of Earth First! in the UK

1992 Peak of Twyford Down protest
UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Earth Summit)

1993 Peak of M11 link road protest

1995 Greenpeace's Brent Spar protest
Revival of Reclaim the Streets
Occupation of Newbury Bypass site begins

The Green Breakthrough of 1989: meaning, significance, legacy

Edited by James McKay & Jean-Francois Mouhot

This witness seminar about the Green Breakthrough of 1989 was held on 14 October 2010 at the Institute of Historical Research, Malet Street, London. The seminar was chaired by James McKay. The witnesses were: Robin Grove-White, Julia Hales, Stephen Joseph, George Medley, Peter Melchett, Sara Parkin, Nicholas Schoon, Charles Secrett and Roger Geffen.

JAMES MCKAY It is clear that the environmental movement experienced dramatic growth in the 1980s. Why this was the case, in what ways, over what issues this development manifested itself, what happened to the environmental movement in the early 1990s (and particularly its relationship with direct action protests over that period's road building programme), and what legacy these years leave us today – all these questions are clearly open to debate and will be touched upon as today's event proceeds.

Perhaps if I just start by going down the panel, asking in general terms, what accounts for the increased public awareness of environmental issues during this period?

ROBIN GROVE-WHITE I think that there were underlying cultural shifts going on. Some were political, some were philosophical and the environmental problematic had penetrated fairly widely so that at a deep level I think there were significant changes and different shifting attitudes towards science and technology, as well as major controversies arising both spontaneously and because of, directly as a result of NGO initiatives. I think that a limitation of the introductory paper is that it doesn't focus at all on land use controversies of which there were many, from nuclear power, to greenbelt, to agriculture, and in a way

in the 1970s and 1980s these were much more conspicuously controversial and immediately felt.

JULIA HAILES

I would add that the Chernobyl disaster had a big impact and raised people's awareness about the potential global impact of nuclear power, but also of environmental issues more generally. I think the other thing that raised awareness about that, and which I think had a huge impact, was thele issue about the destruction of the ozone layer. The fact that that was linked to everyday products that we use – fridges and aerosols and foam packaging – was tremendously important in terms of linking a global phenomenon, completely out of our control, with everyday things that we use. So certainly in terms of the green consumer, the destruction of the ozone layer was really a very key factor.

One of the other things that other people may mention, and I don't know that anybody remembers this, there was a toxic waste ship called the *Karin B* that was going around trying desperately to dock and unleash its toxic cargo, and that caused quite a lot of headlines as well, and I think all those things coming together impacted on and raised people's awareness.*

In 1988, Friends of the Earth denounced the illegal dumping by Italian businessmen of toxic waste in Nigeria. The waste was repatriated by the *Karin B* ship amidst widespread news coverage, as the ship tried to unload its cargo in various countries.

STEPHEN JOSEPH

Public transport is the core of Transport 2000/Campaign for Better Transport's work – so how did these global issues that Julia has mentioned, if at all, effect what was going on? You'll have to remember 1989, as well as being the year of the green breakthrough, was also the year of the *Roads for Prosperity* white paper which launched what was described at the time as the biggest road programme since the Romans.* That spurred a lot of environmental groups into getting involved; it brought together national groups, with local people concerned about the local environment. One of the things, and I agree with Robin about this, that the introductory paper has missed, is interaction between the global things that Julia's mentioned, Chernobyl and so on, with the very strongly perceived threats to the local environment. You have to remember

Department of Transport, *Roads for Prosperity White Paper*, Cm 693, 1988/9.

that this coincided with a period of economic boom and with an attempt by the more ideological parts of the national government to deregulate the planning system. So what we had were what were described as the time as NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard), versus BANANAs (Build Absolutely Anything Anywhere). CPRE and Friends of the Earth were absolutely key in tying together those very local issues (your local environment is being threatened), with the big national global issues and making them part of a broader movement. So CPRE was active and was absolutely instrumental in fighting and getting backbench Conservative MPs wound up about this. Particularly at the time (and it's probably still true), the CPRE membership and the grassroots of the Conservative Party, well they weren't actually synonymous but there was a good overlap, and it meant that suddenly the Conservatives, who saw deregulated planning as part of the next stage of privatisation, suddenly found that they had a large scale resistance movement on their hands, spearheaded I think by Michael Heseltine who took the cause up on the backbenches. Suddenly planning and local environmental issues became something that had political ascendency. Then you had the Roads for Prosperity programme; that generated All London Against the Road Building Menace (ALARM), which became Alliance Against the Road Building Menace UK,* and we'll come perhaps later to the links between the national groups and the direct action groups. You had this huge upsurge of anti roads protests, and so I would argue that the national and local issues particularly in transport became very large. Also, at the same time Margaret Thatcher made a speech about the environment.* Yet she also talked about the great car economy, so there was a huge conflict there which no government has yet been able to reconcile: on the one hand wanting to champion independent car use, and on the other hand wanting to protect the environment. That was a huge concern at the time.

Two other comments: firstly, the introductory paper doesn't really

Alarm UK was a protest movement active at the forefront of the 1990s campaigns against the British Government's roadbuilding plans. Chaired by John Stewart, it operated as an umbrella, coordinating body, providing support and information to local campaigns. Particularly associated with the 1992 Twyford Down protest, the group grew out of the London-based Alarm (All London Against the Road Menace) (source: Database of archives of NGOs, www.dango.bham.ac.uk).

Margaret Thatcher made three noted speeches on the environment in 1989 & 1990: in September 1988 to the Royal Society; in October 1988 to the Conservative Party Conference, and in November 1989, to the UN General Assembly.

mention the links with the water privatisation issue, which was core in getting the Labour movement to see the environment in the mainstream.* I had some indirect involvement at the time with SERA, which had a public health group at the time; this brought together some major trade unions and they became much more aware than they had been on environmental issues.* Secondly, there was the GLC. Ken Livingstone* was probably one of the first mainstream politicians who really got the environment, who really championed public transport and showed what could be done, through that whole fares fair business, echoed by South Yorkshire who'd also done cheap fares.* That had been huge battle and it had presented an alternative to road building, an alternative to the great car economy.

The 1989 Water Act privatised England and Wales' ten Regional Water Authorities.

Formed in 1973, the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) is an environmental lobby group within the British Labour party.

Ken Livingstone, Labour politician, leader of the Greater London Council 1981-86.

'Fares Fair', lowering the cost of public transport to users, was a high-profile policy of Ken Livingstone's during his time as leader of the GLC.

JAMES MCKAY

The very specific national political context that Stephen's outlined there – how far did that relate to what was going on in the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) at the time?

GEORGE MEDLEY

In the early part of the 1980s, WWF was really a totally animal-focused organisation with relatively little interest in 'the environment' as such. I think an interest grew during the latter part of the 1980s, with what was happening elsewhere in the world. I think that previously mentioned incidents and issues, like Chernobyl, brought about a sea-change in the concept of what WWF really was all about, which of course eventually ended up in a change of their name from the World Wildlife Fund to the Worldwide Fund for Nature.

I think one of the places where WWF did exercise influence was in the scientific membership and the ability to motivate that membership and be fairly vociferous about certain environmental issues. There was also quite a lot going on behind the scenes with particularly the formation of the FSC, getting together forestry and making certain that wood in this country came from sustainable sources.* It's one of the major benefits that WWF was able to bring

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an NGO established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests, and provide an accreditation scheme for responsibly produced wood.

to the environmental movement at that time. Otherwise it had been fairly remote in terms of the direct action that most of the other NGOs would have been exercising. I think it has been more of a background influence.

JAMES MCKAY Peter, how far did Greenpeace stand alone from this? Did they perceive themselves as standing apart from what was going on in the rest of the environment during the 1980s? How far was it a networked organisation?

PETER MELCHETT We were apart because involvement in breaking the law and taking non-violent direct action wasn't something that groups either wanted to do or wanted to be associated with, but I think that masks a much closer relationship in reality: from Wildlife Link* and work on things like whaling, to informal meetings and so on.

The Wildlife and Countryside Link (aka Link), is the umbrella body for the UK environmental voluntary sector, aiming to increase the sector's impact on policy and the environment through coordination and cooperation. Wildlife Link was established in 1980 by Peter Melchett. The current organisation was formed through that body's subsequent merger in 1990 with Countryside Link.

Can I make two quick points in addition? I think Chernobyl, which Julia mentioned, had an effect in undermining a blind faith in science and technology. This didn't just apply to nuclear power. Chernobyl had a significant impact on claims that CFCs weren't destroying the ozone layer. People just did not automatically believe those things, or that toxic waste wasn't really polluting the sea. The 1970s and the early 1980s was really a period of disclosing things which had been hidden in the environmental movement. So Greenpeace went and showed whales being killed by the Russians off the Californian coastline. Nobody in America had dreamt that whales were being killed just across the horizon. And all the Greenpeace action through Europe and elsewhere showing toxic pipes discharging stuff, actually physically showing this by blocking them and attracting publicity, was a huge revelation. That was sufficient to get coverage and actually things changed subsequently, as I'll come on to talk about.

The second point I wanted to make, maybe less sexy but nevertheless important for those of us that are running NGOs, is the change in fundraising techniques. People just assume that the

number of supporters is some accurate linear reflection of interest. A lot of it is to do with the amount of money people have to invest in fundraising, the fundraising techniques that are available to them, and how effective they are. They all have a lifetime, and in the late 1970s I think it was, Greenpeace International introduced direct mail fundraising from the States to Europe, and it was quickly adopted by WWF, Greenpeace UK and others, and it had quite a dramatic impact on membership.* You've seen another example more recently, I'm afraid to say, as Greenpeace introduced the street fundraisers, the chuggers, which started in Austria and were spread by Greenpeace through Europe.* By then direct mail had largely lost any chance of being a cost effective way to recruit people. So you need to remember there are a whole lot of different factors involved in income and membership. Just looking at overall levels, without being aware of the techniques used, is going to be misleading.

Direct mail, the postal targeting of likely supporters based upon their demographic or activity profiles, became a popular recruitment and fundraising tactic for NGOs and political parties during the 1980s.

Chuggers, a tongue-in-cheek portmanteau of 'charity' and 'muggers'.

JAMES MCKAY I want to come back to that whole issue about organisational development and how far NGOs can stimulate their own demand, in a moment.

Sara, the discussion so far has covered a diverse range of issues that emerged during the 1980s: from Chernobyl at one extreme and the ozone layer to local land use controversies in the UK. What the Green Party was trying to do was to present an entire programme that tied all of these things together. Was this a task that became easier for you during the 1980s?

SARA PARKIN* Context matters, because what happened in different countries depended on different constellations of things. Particularly, there were five interacting things going on, that determined what happened to all the individual parts, if you like. One of those was the pressure groups, and there was a lot of interaction going on. And there were other individuals responding to evidence who were not necessarily involved in pressure groups, but they were getting

involved in different ways through other organisations or just in the neighbourhood. Then there were the political parties, and I think the key thing about the Green political parties, though perhaps a lot of the perception was that they were just about the environment, they actually made the connections to the wellbeing of people and the economy, and so there were interactions with different sorts of groups, not just environmental NGOs but other sorts of NGOs too. Then there were what I sum up as the life-stylers, which was a range of people who were living the green ideal, according to whatever they thought it might be, actually experimenting in different things. The fifth is actually what I call moles, because at the time there were people in all sorts of animal organisations, in government, in churches, in businesses who knew that this mattered and they were on side. And it's the interaction between all of that.

Stephen mentioned Thatcher and her speech. That was Crispin Tickell suddenly remembering she was a chemist, and he gave her a paper to read on the plane about the chemistry of what was happening in the upper atmosphere, and that's when she got it.* There was also Derek Osborn when he was still at the Department of the Environment, and I was in there one day and he said, for God's sake can you get the Green movement to do something about water, because we need to do something about water, but we cannot get ministerial buy-in to it unless there's a bit of rattling of the bars of the cage.* So that's just examples that all of that interactivity, and I think you'll miss something if you just think of NGOs as operating in complete isolation.

Sir Crispin Tickell was British Ambassador to the United Nations and Permanent Representative on the UN Security Council between 1987 and 1990.

Derek Osborn was Director General, Environmental Protection, at the Department of the Environment, 1990-95.

When we came to 1989, when the Green Party polled its 15 per cent, that was preceded right through the 1980s by an increase in local council seats that none of the commentators had really clocked. And so it came as a shock that we got 15 per cent, but actually, we thought we'd do quite well. The key thing was that we imploded, because we were not prepared to succeed. One of the things I spent most of 1989 doing was trying to get the Green Party

to come up with a strategy for a big vote. There were big votes for Greens all over Europe. We'd had this increase in our number of seats. The feed-back from the campaigning was good. But the Party was not prepared to succeed. They appointed thirty two speakers after the election, and the media ended up losing interest. I think that may well have contributed to the sort of deflating in the early 1990s. I know there were other things as well, but if the Green Party had been able to actually follow through its success with any seriousness, helped by the NGOs, I think it would have been quite different. As the person who emerged as the face of the Party at this point, I got no briefings internally. Instead, the Green Party was in the grips of all sorts of arguments about whether we should be a political party at all. It was the NGOs that briefed me, and therefore allowed me to keep a face out in the media at that time. So I think that was quite a big contribution to the collapse in the 1990s.

JAMES MCKAY Nicholas, by the time you took over as environment correspondent of the *Independent*, it was at the very peak of what we're talking about. Clearly the 1990s was different for the environment movement than the 1980s. How did you perceive that transition as a working journalist at the time?

NICHOLAS SCHOON As far as the media is concerned I do feel the NGOs in the 1980s played a huge role in making first the serious newspapers and the BBC, and then the mid market tabloids, really get into the environment. I also think the editors, clever editors, looked at half a decade of pretty solid economic growth, and they understood that a lot of their readers would be getting interested in this issue. That's why they did it – they knew their readers wanted to read about it.

I want to go back to the absolute basics with this. The absolute basics are that there have been environmental problems all through history and through pre-history. They have been, I think mostly local. What people really cottoned on to in the second half of the

last century was that we were moving into new times and the environment was a global issue. There were a series of mounting environmental crises. We can talk about lots of the small things that happened, as the introductory paper does, and they're all true, all these incidents matter. Yet issues mount up, in a sort of ratchet effect. There are waves of concern and then the Establishment seeks to deal with the issues, but they don't really, fundamentally, deal with them. And so the concerns come back and it is just going to grow and grow and grow. I see what happened in the 1980s as another wave of growth; there'll be a further wave and a further retreat, but these are very special times. Humanity hasn't lived through any quite like them ever before, and the next 50 years are going to be extremely interesting and there's going to be more and more about the environment. Maybe, hopefully, there'll be a series of breakthrough years and decades or else we're in terrible, terrible trouble.

CHARLES SECRETT

The differences in the way individual organisations are constituted, and the way that they work, is crucial. The environmental movement is essentially a collaborative, cooperative movement, whatever the individual little petty territorialities and jealousies. But nevertheless there are distinct differences in approach. So talking about Friends of the Earth, the organisation I primarily worked for over 20 years, I think there were a couple of things that were distinctive. Not unique, but distinctive. The first was that it really was an organisation whose founding principle was that the local matters. The founder of Friends of the Earth was the person who came up with the phrase, think globally, act locally.* Another thing that distinguished FoE was whereas Greenpeace had the magic of a picture or a video telling a thousand stories, FoE's great strength, and weakness, was always trying to find a thousand words to sum up the picture. There are strengths and weaknesses in both approaches; they complement each other very well. But the idea that you should

David Brower founded Friends of the Earth in the US in 1969. He had previously been Executive Director of the US environmental group The Sierra Club.

always let the facts get in the way of a good campaign and a good story was another very important part of our contribution. Allied to this was the notion that there were linkages, but linkages not only in terms of the issues and agendas, but also in terms of geography and impact and influence between the local, the national and the global. And that was very much characterised in the way that we shaped our campaigns and we shaped our organisation internationally and globally, where each national group was responsible for its own campaigns and that you came together. That was true of Friends of the Earth in this country in terms of our local groups, operating on a principle of consenting adults. You agreed to do things and when the particular majority was mobilised then either a global campaign would be run, or a national campaign would be run. This is a different way of working. It has strengths and weaknesses. It's neither better nor worse; it's just a different way of working from other organisations.

There are couple of other things that I'd like to add in terms of issues that people have already raised. I'm thinking of Robin's opener about looking at the 1980s as very much an evolution of ideas and clash of ideas, a dynamic in terms of both an old way of thinking that was very much characterised by business as usual and politics as usual, that really by the end of the 1980s was being fundamentally challenged. By the end of the 1980s, the Labour movement had almost collapsed. NGOs, the rights movement, the poverty movement, the environment and development movements, had become de facto an informal opposition. That's why you get the rise of the Green Party at the end of the 1980s.

I think that what's also true is that we saw another evolution over the 1980s and this really does distinguish pre-1985 era and the post-1985 era. Julia's touched on this and George has touched on this – this movement from environmentalism meaning looking after species and conserving species, to environmentalism as a systems-based movement. One of the key changes was the movement from

local and national agendas to global agendas. That was partly mirrored and influenced by the environmental movements being able to tell the story in a different way, not just around individual sites or individual species, but around systems and collections of life that humanity was dependent upon. And so in the mid to late 1980s you also saw some very important global campaigns emerging that captured this systems approach to the question: are we living properly or not? Acid rain campaigns, tropical rainforest campaigns; these became, along with the ozone campaign, the poster issues of the movement in a way that whales and endangered species had been in the 1970s and early 1980s.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio, 1992; commonly known as the Rio Earth Summit.

I think by the 1990s and the post-Rio world, we moved on again.* If we went from species into systems, we then went to society and sustainability, and finally the coherent linking together of the interrelationship between humanity, economy, lifestyle of the society and governance of the planet and politics. So: species, systems, society and sustainability.

A couple of other things just to add briefly – we haven't talked about the European Union. I would say that the power of the European Union was far more influential in terms of government and change in government in this country in the late 1980s, particularly when it came to environmental legislation, especially over quality control and waste management issues. I think that to our credit we can also say as a movement we were very aware of this politically. We put a lot of our effort into getting the political breakthroughs and cross-European working through all member states, through our international networks and our informal coalitions, to get the EU to do the right thing. That was the only way that an ideologically driven government was going to change anything, particularly change legislation. So I think that the EU was a fantastically important influence in terms of changing what happened at a political level, not just in agriculture but right across the board.

Then we had the run up to Rio, and one of the very important pub-

lications and processes was the Gro Harlem Brundtland initiative, *Our Common Future*. It was the first real coherent expression of the ideas and theory of global sustainability, and led directly to the Earth Summit at Rio. All these global issues actually meant that the environment was becoming political. Acid rain, for example – we had the Swedes and the Norwegians banging on about the British Government and its love affair with CEGB.* That raised questions about how far it was right to privatise, how far it was right to favour particular polluting industries just because it fitted in the political ideology, when other solutions are being ignored or downtrodden. And this led to huge international tensions, particularly with people within the stable arena of Europe.

Central Electricity Generating Board. Up until privatization in the 1990s, the CEGB was responsible for electricity generation in England and Wales.

The final point that I'd like to make is that we must not forget about the significance of individuals. We talk a lot about organisations, but actually organisations are driven by individuals. I think it's worth mentioning two out of many individuals, some of whom are very well known, some of whom are not very well known. This is true locally, nationally and internationally. But I think that two individuals really were drivers for what happened in the 1980s. One of them was Des Wilson, who started off as a journalist and then became a campaigner. He ran a breakthrough campaign, CLEAR, the campaign for lead-free petrol, in the early 1980s. What Des Wilson showed was that you could take on government and win, and you could use evidence and popular appeal and link together a whole set of issues to ensure a breakthrough, and that in a democracy reason would eventually work. Another example that I'd like to give is somebody who's no longer with us, an old colleague of ours called Andrew Lees. He was a classic example of the guerrilla campaigner, unbelievably expert at mustering evidence, finding out exactly what government or industry thought and then being able to demonstrate they were bloody liars. His persistence and fanaticism for the truth to come out was absolutely critical in milking every possible political and media opportunity out of incidents like

Karin B. So we mustn't forget about charismatic individuals who've made all the difference.

JAMES MCKAY I'd like to come back to Peter's point about the ability of NGOs to create their own support, create their own incomes, amid the professionalisation and changes in organisation and marketing that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Peter, would you be able to sketch in the chronology of these marketing changes that took place in Greenpeace?

PETER MELCHETT Yes, but I want to start by agreeing strongly with something Nick said, that this is not a human construct that people running NGOs created. It was based on ecological realities. An awful lot of commentary skips over that so it's quite right to draw attention to it. So all of the things that NGOs did, or techniques they used, rested on a few fundamentals. As Charles pointed out, NGOs were generally speaking the truth, and the government and industries were lying. The evidence shows that was the case. And without being right and having a real problem which we had real solutions to, all the rest of the communications with the public would have been worthless and short-term.

It was a period when the unions were losing both credibility and connection with the public, and there were the cultural shifts which Robin mentioned, so many people were keen to identify themselves with this new and truthful movement. When I got to Greenpeace in 1985, the merchandising operation was very big. I think we had in stock 120 years' supply of Antarctic posters. They'd gone slightly overboard in their desire to communicate the threat to this wonderful and pristine wilderness which Greenpeace eventually internationally succeeded in protecting. But people were keen to have posters on their walls or wear badges and t-shirts. It was a means of identifying with this significant cause. That reflected not so much a source of income, because very few NGOs made much money out of selling stuff like that to people, but it was indicative

of the desire to be involved. That was the significant thing – the desire to be involved, the desire to show other people you were involved. Joining was part of that, and then the techniques of using direct mail, as I said earlier, allowed that to be done in a fairly cost-effective way.

JULIA HAILES The late 1980s was the shift, if you like, of environmentalism from the fringe into the mainstream. Part of what Green consumerism did was put environmentalism out to everybody in their everyday living and relate it to their lifestyles and what they were doing. You didn't have to be a member of a campaign organisation or even vote for the Green Party; it was something people could weave into, and we brought it to people who worked in the City or worked in advertising, or whatever. I don't know if Sara remembers this, but I gave a speech at the Green Party conference in 1989, and I was booed and heckled from the audience. In fact I think it was the first really antagonistic speech that I'd ever given. One of the audience said, why have we got someone on the platform who's making money out of the environment? There was a really strong anti-capitalist feeling. So when Sara was saying that the Green Party didn't completely pick up on the popularity it had got at that time, my view is that one of the reasons for that is it gave people the feeling that it was a fringe movement, something that they didn't necessarily want to be associated with, and yet at the same time there was increasing concern about the environmental issues.

ROBIN GROVE-WHITE I think there's a lot I agree with there, but how you interpret the Green Party's 15 per cent is a very interesting question. Did something significant happen in 1989? Was this a watershed of some kind? I think it was, although I think one can overstate its significance for the reason that Peter mentioned, that these are realist views. It's not something you can just construct suddenly.

Just on the differences between what was happening pre-1989 in terms of the development of NGO politics on the environment,

and what happened after 1989, I think one thing that's very, very important is the end of the Cold War. I think that in the pre-1989 period, we were operating in a situation where states were far, far more important than they subsequently became for campaigning, even under Thatcherism. So they were the only place to go. And so the principle NGO political tactic was the infliction of pain on governments. It was the only way you could get their attention. It's very important to read a lot of the campaign activity in the 1980s in that light.

Then you have Thatcher's speech in 1988. This took things for multiple reasons into a new phase. The Green Party's 15 per cent reflected that this was resonating, and then I think personally that this was a bit of a Faustian bargain for the NGOs. The NGOs were accepted and became part of the collaborative development of the discourse of environmental policy, at a real level. The Department of the Environment (DoE) became significant; Chris Patten,* the Secretary of State, was a serious heavyweight; the strengthening of the officials inside the DOE from 1989 onwards was very important; these were very significant moves. I think that the incorporation of NGOs into the Rio processes and the post Rio processes and so on, was a very two-edged sword. I think there was no alternative, but there was a very different set of political challenges that resulted.

Chris Patten (Lord Patten of Barnes), Secretary of State for the Environment, 1989-90.

GEORGE MEDLEY

Something not properly addressed yet is the professionalism that came into the NGO movement. I was one of the first directors of a charity brought in from a business background to make business attitudes used in that organisation. From that came so much of the professionalism in terms of fundraising, in terms of the attitude to media, public relations, and all that. I think that was a very important facet of what was happening, not just in the environmental movement, but in charities as a whole, and it increased significantly the sums of money that were made available. WWFs income rose

from £0.75 million in 1970 to £22 million in 1990. That's an enormous increase, and of course that money can then be used for proselytising, it also can be used to increase your membership. The membership side of these organisations was extremely important, a widespread linkage of people throughout the country who were willing (in passive ways, sometimes) to support the movement. I think that was a very important part of ensuring that NGOs expanded so much over the period.

SARA PARKIN I think the other thing that was happening during the 1980s was that was really when the radical free market economists were operating what they themselves called guerrilla warfare on getting their ideas into power; of course the apogee of this was Reagan and Thatcher. That was happening right the way through the 1980s. One of the responses was the development of The Other Economic Summit, a reaction to the G7. The G7 was coming to London in 1984, and so we put up The Other Economic Summit, which was a whole load of people saying, the G7 have got it wrong. If we want environmental and social sustainability there's another way of doing the economy. Over two or three years they held The Other Economic Summits, which then transformed into the New Economics Foundation.

One of the shifts which I think is important is that the campaigning NGOs of all sorts, whether it was environment or social or development or whatever, began to shift from opposition to proposition. And I think that was a key shift. We had to start really giving much more into proposition. I think a lot of the NGOs have done that.

CHARLES SECRETT I just want to pick up on two or three things that have already been said. One was Nick's point earlier on about, when one's looking at evolution of an organisation or an agenda over time, it's absolutely to be expected that you see there's almost a wave function, a series of peaks and troughs, and I think that's something that needs to

captured a little better in this so-called collapse of the NGO movement in the early 1990s.

It wasn't just a recessionary effect, which always has an effect on membership because of disposable income, but it was also I think to do with another part of the wave function. I left FoE in 1989 and worked for another organisation, worked in Brazil for a bit and then came back to FoE in 1993. There was definitely a sense of: oh my God, Rio; it was like you'd run a marathon, and there was a year or three where that had a significant influence on the movement and on the interest of the newspapers in environmental issues, and it was just like, for God's sake, we've just got to catch our breath. That also, during the recession, had an effect. But I think again there was another transition going on which was the transition of ideas. Post Rio a lot of groups struggled to come to terms with what sustainable development, what sustainability issues, what the integration of green economic thinking of justice issues, of social issues, of the other two dimensions of sustainability actually meant to what we'd been doing for 30 years over so-called strip environmental campaign, even though it was never strictly about the environment. I think that was another factor in this retrenchment, rather than collapse, that one should talk about. I think this is another example of that wave function that Nick was talking about. In terms of Robin's two-edged sword point, linking it to George's point about increasing professionalism and your question about fundraising techniques and membership and sophisticated use of IT systems and outreach techniques – I very much think that the two-edged sword analogy is a very very good one, because I think that with the mainstreaming of the environmental movement and environmental NGOs right across the board including the direct action movement, we've actually got to face up to a fundamental truth when it comes to influence. There are certain things, tactics and approaches that have developed over the last 30, 40 years that NGOs in the wider sense of the word, local, national and global are

very good at. They're very good at awareness raising. They're very good at evidence gathering. They're very good at exposés and who's doing the nasty things that no one's really finding out about. So they're very good at stopping specific bad things. We're good at generating media coverage and public debate, and we're good at incremental policy achievement. Those are the things that I think that we're good at.

But we don't really change anything. Stuff has got worse over 40 years, not better. And our two fundamental failures are this: for all the co-option into government, we've never persuaded anyone apart from a junior member of the Treasury, Department of Transport, Agriculture, Business, Industry, the Cabinet Office and Number 10, to take any of our good ideas on board. It just hasn't happened. For all the money, the staff numbers, the members, it is extraordinary how little political influence we have. It is absolutely extraordinary.

The second thing that we've not done at all is, we haven't changed behaviour and we haven't changed electorates, apart from a tiny minority of people. When people go into the ballot box, they vote on other issues, and environmentalism is still seen as about the environment, not about humanity. And so in terms of the push of ideas, which I fervently believe in, I have to say, no, we haven't succeeded. Ministers and civil servants know this. They'll offer you tea and biscuits until the cows come home, because they know it's not going to make any difference to what they're actually going to decide to do in their manifesto. They've even got to the stage now where they don't give a damn what they put in their manifesto. Immediately as we've seen with this latest coalition, they start going back diametrically opposite to what they said they would do.* So there are some big, big political issues here, which again I think is to do with a point that Nick was raising and that Robin was raising and others have touched on about where we are in the evolution of political democracy and where NGOs and progressive movements

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government which took office in May 2010.

and ideas stand in terms of helping to shape what is going to come out of what I think is a wider collapse, which is almost a collapse of good government. We've got some big challenges that we're not yet rising to.

STEPHEN JOSEPH I just wanted to come back to one of Sara's comments about talking around business. One of the things that you haven't mentioned is the intent to try and change economics, talking about externalities, putting money value on the environment and things like that. I think that was interesting at the time as an attempt to try and start to talk the language of the people Charles has just been describing, and try and get them involved. To an extent it helped. People like the economists kind of took that seriously. Fundamentally what ran through all of that was the idea that we could put money values on the environment and then trade them off against in the transport case small time savings in the motorists or whatever it was.

What I would say however, where we succeeded temporarily was when the economics and environmental agenda came together. That's true both at a systematic level, at government level, and at an individual level. So at a governmental level when basically there wasn't the money to build all those roads in the 1990s, the Government used the environment as an excuse to scrap them all, so we won, temporarily. But then they came back again when there was some growth. Not all of them, but some of them. On the behavioural change side, maybe the lesson is that you sell environmental behaviour to people on the basis that it saves you money, and by the way, you help the environment. But that seems to me that fundamentally Charles is right – neither governments nor individuals change their behaviour very much except when they're forced to, by shortage of money. That was true of nuclear power, for instance; it's been true of lots of other things; basically when governments can't afford to subsidise agriculture or intensive energy or whatever it is, they stop, sometimes using the environment as an excuse.

JAMES MCKAY I want to take the opportunity to start bringing in some of the expertise from the floor, as well. Does anybody have any questions or comments that they would like to share at this point?

CHRIS CHURCH I worked at Friends of the Earth from 1984 to 1986, and I'm now Chair of the UK Low Carbon Communities Network. I read the introductory paper with interest, and I feel that what isn't captured is the trough that preceded it in the early 1980s. I think you can certainly look at a first wave, from 1970 to 1979, when a lot of the organisations on the platform were developing their modus operandi. I think there's a high point in 1979, which I think is very relevant to the direct action talked about, because one of the high point issues was 7,500 people going over or through the fence at Torness, something which wasn't recorded for any national media, and therefore from some perspectives didn't happen.* But it was probably the largest single environmental direct action, in terms of sheer numbers going illegally into a secure space.

Torness is a nuclear power station in Scotland, whose construction started in 1980, after a long planning process.

In the same year you had the huge 'save the whale' rally and 10,000 cyclists 'reclaiming the road' in Trafalgar Square. But, six months later, Margaret Thatcher brought in cruise missiles; CND grew from two part-time staff to over 100 in a year and a half. At that point, with the possible exception of Greenpeace, most environmental organisations lost a huge amount of support very rapidly. Friends of the Earth group numbers dropped by about 45 per cent from 1979 to 1983. The figure in the introductory paper of 17 staff in 1982 for Friends of the Earth, doesn't do it full justice, because in 1984, the number was as low as 11. When I joined, I was number 12 on the staff roster. And that went from 12 in 1984, to over 25 in 1986, to over 50 in 1988, and hit 100 in early 1990s. So it's six years of doubling, every two years. And I think that that only happened because it started at such a low point. CND was turning 400,000 people out in the mid-1980s, and had 2,000 plus local groups. But that collapsed at about the same point the environmental move-

ment really went into overdrive.

The direct action didn't go away. The Torness Alliance mobilised all those thousands of people to go to Torness and got criticised by Friends of the Earth, just as Friends of the Earth was a little guilty of criticising some of the road protesters years later. Those direct action people then moved on, by and large, to cruise missiles. Much of CND didn't actually like the environment and there were lots of people there who saw it as a diversion from the peace issue. So I think the growth in the late 1980s really needs to be put into context of what went before.

MATTHEW HILTON My name's Matthew Hilton from the University of Birmingham. What do we remember the 1980s for? Is it the environmental movement, or is it the decade that we learnt to shop? Now, I want to pick up maybe some of those boos in the audience at Julia's speech to the Green Party. Because what is the relationship of the environmental movement, to the consumer society which was burgeoning in that decade? There's an orgy of spending taking place in the mid-1980s and going onto the late 1980s. Where's the environmental movement in relationship to that? Is it a guilty moment among shoppers in that decade, that they now need to start shopping more ethically, or more green? Why is it that the two seem to go hand-in-hand, and this may be related to something, such as Julia's *Green Consumer Guide*. But I think there's something else going on, perhaps in terms of how people support the environmental organisations, which brings me on to the second point, about membership. I was quite struck by how membership didn't really come up very much in many of the panels' comments, and I was wondering what the relationship was between your organisations and their membership? Was membership something that could be mobilised through your professionalization? Or was it seen as a more active, democratic force? Were these participants, along with yourselves, in the Green movement, or were they there just to fill in postcards, or

turn up at key moments? How did you conceive of your members? I'm interested in these questions because they raise some of the negative aspects that Charles mentioned back at the end of the session, which was a question of 'what did you do wrong'? It has been suggested that maybe you didn't impact on the government very much. Is that related to this issue that came up about the reconciliation of environmental thought with thinking about the market? Was this reconciliation a mistake, or was it a necessary path to pursue? And also, one of the other failures in the sense that Charles mentioned is this issue of not persuading the mass voting public of the central premises of some of your concerns. Is that, perhaps, related to an issue about relationship between these organisations and their membership, in which there isn't a wider consciousness-raising about the deeper, structural issues going on as well?

JULIA HAILES

One of the things I would raise as a change was probably just as your point, and that, in a way John and I very much focused on, was that instead of just attacking companies and saying, 'Look, you're really polluting, and we hate you and you shouldn't exist', we were actually looking at it in terms of opportunities for companies. So we were saying to them, 'If you produce products that have less impact on the environment, then there is an opportunity there for you, and it's better for your business, but you'll also be greener and there'll be more people out there buying your products.' It was John who actually coined the phrase, 'green consumer'. A lot of the comments we got at the time, from particularly the environmentalist sector, were saying, 'Well, it's a paradox. The Green consumer doesn't make sense, because you can't be green and a consumer because, basically, that doesn't go together.' And we took a different approach, and said we wanted actually to change them, in terms of what they were doing, and look at it in a more constructive and positive way.

And I have to say that I disagree with Charles. He's looking at it a

lot from a government point of view, and I can understand that perspective. But, certainly from a corporate perspective, it was incredibly successful. When we wrote *The Green Consumer Guide*, I did the research. I rang up all the UK supermarkets and I asked them about their environmental policies, what they were doing. They had no idea what I was talking about. They understood about E for additives, and health issues, but they had no concept of what CFCs and the ozone layer were, or phosphates in detergents, or any of the other issues. When I did research six months after the publication of *The Green Consumer Guide* – it came out in September 1988 – for the follow-on book, which was *The Supermarket Guide*, every single supermarket had an environmental advisor. And, of course, that's not going to instantaneously change the environment, but it did hugely change the perspective. And the reason why they did that was because they recognised that it was their customers who were interested, who had gone out and bought *The Green Consumer Guide*, who were actually wanting them to make the changes. And if they wanted to appeal to their customers, they had to understand what this issue was about, and change. If you step further back, of course, it's a bit depressing. The rain forests are still being destroyed, global temperatures rise. Although, perhaps the ozone layer is a positive story. But generally, you can look at the big picture and feel a bit negative. But if you go a little bit closer and actually look at what the individuals are doing, and general awareness, and what corporations are doing, I think it could be really quite positive, and there's a lot, lot more happening than there was in the early 1980s.

PETER MELCHETT

Mao Tse-Tung or Mao Zedong (1893-1976), Head of the People's Republic of China, 1949-76.

I disagree with Charles, quite strongly. It's true, of course, that we haven't succeeded where Mao Tse-Tung* and the USSR failed, and changed the world economic order and the way people think about that. But Greenpeace always had fairly specific and, I would say, more realistic and modest ambitions. So, we wanted to stop whales

being killed by commercial whaling. From hundreds of thousands of whales being killed every year when we started, including by countries like Spain and Russia, it's now a handful, a couple of hundred. That's still too many, I think it should stop. But to say we've failed is wrong.

When we started the campaign to protect the seas around Europe, the focus was to stop waste being dumped in the seas around the north and west of Europe, and that's been successful. We've stopped nuclear waste dumping, we've stopped sewage sludge dumping, we've stopped industrial waste dumping, we've stopped oil rigs being dumped. All of that is now legally secure, and the rivers have been cleaned up, and Friends of the Earth had a significant impact on that. I'd like to say, most clearly, we've won in Europe on GM. I mean, when we started the GM campaign, 70 per cent of processed food in this country had GM in it. And everyone, but everyone, from government to industry and food companies, supermarkets, apart from the public, were saying, 'This is going to be all of our food by 2011.' You would all be eating everything GM, if their predictions were right, and they'd got 70 per cent of processed food already. It was hard to see how they might be wrong. And the fact is we're not eating any of it. So, I think if you say the NGOs were going to do 'x' and have failed, when that is not something most of them ever intended to do, of course, we've failed. I think a common NGO failure is to seize failure from the jaws of success.

CHRISTOPHER ROOTES

I want to get to the what and the why. There are layers of explanation here, in looking through the 1980s, and I can take Chris Church's point, if we go back a bit further the stories are more complicated. But, looking through the 1980s, there was an unprecedented surge in popular concern in the environmental issues, and you see the growth in members or supporters of environmental NGOs in Britain, particularly the campaigning NGO, rising rapidly

up to about 1990. But it doesn't collapse thereafter, and what happens is I think we get a decade of consolidation, really. And in some organisations, well, there must have been a large measure of indigestion, for the likes of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, by about 1990. The systems need to be redeveloped, and what Greenpeace does, if I remember rightly, is they stopped spending money on attracting new supporters, and they focused more on actually campaigning. Now, that will have an impact in the graphs of numbers of supporters, but it doesn't actually affect what the NGO does over time. And, of course, what's happening through that period is that other new wave environmental NGOs are being established. Others are growing, so that by the end of the 1990s, the environmental movement, if we can call the collectivity of all the environmental NGOs that, has grown considerably by comparison with that point in the 1990s. And then, growth continues through to the present day.

But the story of sudden rise and then collapse, I think, is just wrong. I mean, that's not the story I would want told, and not the story I have told. Why did things not continue to flourish so much during the 1990s? Well, I think it's partly competing issues, and there are different sets of competing issues in different countries. I don't entirely agree with Sara's account of what went wrong with the British Greens. I think internal strategy is part of the story. But I think also the failure of the Greens to grow beyond their rather freakish result in 1989, was a function of political competition. The other political parties wised up to the environment, particularly the Liberal Democrats, who in 1989 had been more concerned with their internal processes. And in subsequent general elections, particularly, the Liberal Democrats had a very clearly more sophisticated environmental agenda, which didn't leave as much space for the Greens, even had they been organised enough to campaign effectively, which they proved they weren't. But gradually, through the 1990s, the environment seeps into the mainstream of

politics.

SARA PARKIN I think one of the problems with the Green Party was that it didn't have a particularly strategic approach to how a Green Party in the British electoral system could work, and it was very ambivalent about whether we actually wanted to get people into power. The Green Party have always argued, and I argued this at the time, that our job is to get ideas into power, and there are various routes of doing that. NGOs are one route, and actually taking them into the electoral process is another. Now, sometimes, we might be a vehicle for those ideas by getting elected. But another way is to change what the other parties say. If we hadn't imploded, and we had been able to follow through after 1989, to make sure we were always intellectually ahead of where the other parties were, I think we could have made a great difference. But the general collapse was because people were not in any way tuned in to success, and how that success might present itself, and how to make use of it. And also, there were quite a lot of people who didn't think there should be a political party, and they were in the Green Party to stop it, which also made life a little bit difficult.

If I could go back to the question, what went wrong? I sort of half agree with Charles and I half agree with Peter, because it's quite easy to think of what went well, and success, in terms of what your own organisation is doing. But if you do go outside and see what happened, I think we have to say that on a global scale, it has not worked. You know, everything's getting worse. We've won a few skirmishes, but we haven't actually won any battles. But I think one of the reasons for that, and others may disagree, is that I don't think that, either collectively or individually as organisations, we've had a broad strategy regarding our role in making something happen. There was an attempt made, and we started it in about 1994-5, to come up with a coalition of NGOs called the Real World Coalition. And we published a book called *Politics of the Real World* in 1996, and

it was written for us by Michael Jacobs, and it had in it that it was signed off by CEOs of… I can't remember how many, but 30+ NGOs. Now, just imagine if that coalition had followed through. It disintegrated because each individual organisation thought they would do better negotiating for their individual goals on their own, rather than within that coalition. And so, I think one of the things why we are not more than the sum of our parts, is because we don't organise. We don't actually have a longer term plan, to which we're all contributing our various bits , one that we can articulate, and people can get hold of. I mean, just thinking about Copenhagen brings to mind the rammy, the complete rammy of on many parts disgracefully behaved NGOs, fighting for their bit, and to hell with everybody else. And that has left an indelible impression on the heads of state: when it comes to the pressure groups, they're not actually getting their act together. So I think that's been our failure. It might be awfully difficult to organise, but I think, in the age we're in, we're actually going to have to think of different strategies about getting our ideas into power. And I think we're not doing that. And I think that's why we'll struggle to be more than the sum of our collective parts.

JAMES MCKAY Given the number of people that have uttered the words, 'I disagree with Charles,' it might be a good point to bring Charles back into, you know, the discussion.

CHARLES SECRETT Well, just taking this relationship between environmentalism and consumerism, way before *The Green Consumer Guide* came out, NGOs were in some of the most effective actions, very good at organising consumer boycotts. Particularly Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, in this country. And we had a long history of successful consumer boycotts in each of our organisations, and working together. What we primarily did on the consumer side, on issues like tropical timbers and ozone depleting chemicals, was identify the products. For major consumer campaigns, we produced

lists for wide distribution of retail products that you couldn't buy, goods that contained things to avoid, and what the alternatives were that you could buy, having the same domestic or household function, not containing whatever it was that we wanted to avoid buying. That was phenomenally successful and, in fact, a large part of that information fed in to Julia and John's work when they were doing research for the book in 1986, 1987. But I think what was also true was that this fitted into the protest part of our membership. We had a dichotomy in terms of most people, in that their expressions of environmental action were almost of a protest sort: you did this, but you carried on in the mainstream anyway. And I think that was particularly true of our middle class members. It was less true of those of our members from lower incomes. And I don't think just because they had less disposable income. I think it was actually a mentality thing. And we could see that in terms of interactions in public meetings, and through our local group membership as well.

In terms of the points that Peter and Julia were making, actually, frankly I think they've confirmed my perspective. Peter's examples of the range of things that have been stopped were exactly the category of things that I said we were very successful at doing. Very successful at stopping specific things, either as individual organisations or as coalitions. The examples that Peter gave were not just down to Greenpeace. They were down to Greenpeace taking a particular role within a coalition of interests, and other organisations playing to their strengths. The first time that this really happened on a global basis was the alliance in the 1970s between, in alphabetical order, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF over stopping whaling, which was a fantastically successful joint coalition campaign, where each organisation played to its respective strengths. That's what I meant about being one of the categories of things that we were very good at, and not at all trying to demean or diminish those successes.

I think Julia's point about working with industry gave a rather unfortunate example, presenting supermarkets appointing an advisor as being some sort of breakthrough. It's not a breakthrough at all. It's an example of exactly that type of incremental change that I think NGOs are good at. But in terms of when we look at what the retail sector are doing, or what supermarkets are doing, at that time, by comparison with the influence that the environmental advisor had, it was a very small step forward. It's taken 20 years since then, of consistent campaigning, before supermarkets got to where they are now, one of the retail sectors that are ahead of the game. But that came about after 20, 25 years of campaigning, and it's really only representative within that very small part of British or global industry. And that's why I still come back to my main point: for all this whole range of things that we were fantastically successful over as individual organisations, and as a coalition, fundamentally, there are two big, still to be achieved goals. We've not managed to change virtually any government's mainstream thinking about taxation policy regulation, policy guidance or advice (the only exceptions are the Scandinavian nations). And, despite the changes that we and others have accomplished with particular industries or particular companies, we've not changed the way that mass consumers behave, or that mass voters behave. And, until those two parts of the political economy dynamic fundamentally shift, all our big picture objectives about – it's the hippies' expression about living in harmony with the planet, of being able to meet our own needs and wants without destroying nature – we're not going to succeed in those goals. And those are the only two failures that I tried to identify. And I think evidence to the world shows that we still haven't succeeded in doing it. I am an optimist, believe it or not. I do believe that we can get there, but we've got to get much better at the politics and the influence of power in a democracy. We need to be as good at that, as we are at debating the nuances of policy.

NEIL KINGSNORTH Neil Kingsnorth, I work with Friends of the Earth. You've made various comments about the changes in fundraising, in the professionalisation of the NGOs, of changes in marketing brands and so on across that period, and I'm just wondering if there was any change that happened, or that you tried to make happen, in various NGOs over that period, in the way that you engaged and worked with your supporters? Whether that's the likes of Friends of the Earth, whether it's a grassroots network, or WWF, a much more mainstream, larger scale group of financial supporters? If you did, why did you do it? And if you didn't, do you think you should have done?

GEORGE MEDLEY Certainly in WWF, membership was money. And it was used to get money in all sorts of different ways. Secondly, of course, it was a good supporter base, which one could use to activate campaigns and what have you. But the basic thing was money. I don't know if that answers your question. And it may be different for other organisations. But certainly, it was recognised that with a large, broad-based membership, we had a good source of income, but also a good source of influence. And we did use the membership to organise, largely, letter writing or petitions, or things of that nature.

BRIAN DOHERTY Brian Doherty from Keele University. Quite a lot of my previous research was on the direct action networks, and in one piece of research that I did with others, we were looking at local direct action communities. And we found that the differences between those local activist cultures were quite substantial. And I think one of the interesting ways of understanding direct action is that activists didn't come into environmental direct action simply as environmentalists. And they haven't stayed; they come backwards and forwards from environmentalism. So, just to quote one example, one of the people I know who helped to hijack that Drax coal train, before that time, he spent a year working as a human rights volunteer in Guatemala.* And since that time, he's been doing

Drax power station, in North Yorkshire, hit headlines in June 2008 when anti-climate change campaigners staged a direct action protest, stopping a coal-laden train on its way to the power station.

international solidarity work in Palestine. But, in the 1990s, he was doing anti GM crop sabotage and so on. And so, I think it's strategically important for NGOs, if you're going to work with direct action activist networks, to understand that their engagement is with a very different sense of social and political change.

ROGER GEFFEN*

Roger Geffen joined the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) in 1989. He joined the anti-road direct action campaign at Twyford Down in late 1992 and represented the LCC on the Oxleas Alliance, a partnership ranging from WWF to Earth First! He campaigned on other anti-road direct action protests throughout the 1990s and was part of a group of activists who revived the 'Reclaim the Streets' campaign after 1995. He has been involved with the Climate Camp since its beginning in 2005.

I came into environmental action pretty much in the aftermath of 1989, and at that time I'd just left university, and brought my habit of cycling from university where everyone cycled, to London, where it seemed like an eccentric thing to do. I joined the London cycling campaign when I realised that it wasn't just an eccentric thing to do, it was a very good way of overtaking a lot of cars. And that is what started my environmental perspective growing. I was living near Oxleas Wood which was, at that time, emerging as the focal point of the reaction to the government's proclaimed greatest road building programme since the Romans, which had come out in the same year that Mrs Thatcher had made her, sort of, conversion to green issues. So, it took about three years for that kind of tension, that complete schizophrenia, if I can use the word, between what they were saying and what they were doing, to really erupt into a protest movement. It started in particular at Twyford Down.

We've heard the point that organisations are reluctant to offend their members. But I think it's also true that the direct action movement may not be worrying about membership and income, but its agenda is still shaped by who participates. And that brings in slightly different constraints, because we, too, have struggled to be as diverse, as ethnically diverse, as politically diverse, as our theory says we ought to be. So I'll acknowledge that we all have different constraints there.

Friends of the Earth felt very threatened by the arrival of Earth First at Twyford Down. They had this reputation as eco-terrorists from the States, accused by the FBI of bombs and all the rest of it.

Friends of the Earth had done some actions at Twyford Down, waved some banners and done some symbolic action, but then retreated, out of fear of having their name tarnished by association with these eco-terrorists, leaving the field to the eco-terrorists, who then turned out to not be terrorists at all. The direct action activists then gained a hell of a lot of media support, which Friends of the Earth, frankly, missed out on. And then Friends of the Earth came back and, to be fair, put up their hands and said, 'We got that wrong', and aimed to make peace, and to work with the direct action movement, having seen it to have made real impact and have been really successful in terms of galvanising issues.

The government dropped the Oxleas Woods road scheme two days after a bunch of people broke their injunctions, very visibly and publically, at Twyford Down – no coincidence whatsoever. Friends of the Earth had started forming a coalition that actually brought together everybody, as part of the Oxleas Alliance. You know, Oxleas Wood was not just won by direct action in Twyford Down. And it was also that the government could see that, suddenly, the mainstream groups were coming behind this new direct action movement, and were forming this thing called the Oxleas Alliance, and that people from mainstream groups were going to start getting involved in direct action, and they realised they were looking down the barrel of a gun. And they dropped the Oxleas Wood scheme.

So, we'd won one important victory. The government had retreated. We moved on to another road scheme, which actually broadened the issues out. The M11 link road was not about ancient monuments or areas of outstanding beauty or sites of special scientific interest. It was outstandingly un-beautiful, and it was a run-down area that had been waiting to be condemned ever since the government said it was going to bulldozer its way through Leytonstone in the 1960s. It brought up very different issues. It brought up issues around roads versus communities, rather than roads

versus the environment. And that begins to bring in this broader politics that was an important part of the anti-road movement. By 1996, I think that a £24bn road programme had been decimated to £1.5bn road programme. And then, of course, it came back later. But at the time, it was actually a really important victory. And yes, you're right, it still didn't stop capitalism, and it still didn't stop climate change, but it felt we were on our way, which was actually quite an important thing at the time. We broadened out from that. By this stage there were road protests all over the country. Everyone had seen that if you could do it not once at Twyford, but twice, in the most unlikely place at the M11 of Leytonstone, you could do it pretty much anywhere. And people were doing it all over the place.

A group of us had been involved in the M11 link road, then moved on. We'd had a street that had effectively been, I don't know, a little community street. The cars had gone. It had been squatted. It had been pretty much a permanent street party through that summer. And we thought, we could use this on a busy street, as a sort of instant break into the flow of cars. And that this would be a way of moving the debate on from being anti-road, which is easy because it's the government that builds roads, and everyone loves hating the government, to being anti-car, which is a hard thing to do, because individuals drive cars. Actually, street parties were an incredibly effective way of doing that. And this is actually a really interesting place to go. If we'd stuck at that a little longer, I personally think we could have got further with communicating on the wider issue of what's wrong with capitalism. We could have used the car as a bit of a symbol of that. Mrs Thatcher's phrase, 'The great car economy,' what does that mean? The car is this thing that takes up community space. It takes up raw materials to make its tyres, the metal and all the rest of it, and it belches out carbon dioxide and pollution, and causes people asthma, which was a big issue at the time, which is very much forgotten now. Gross national waste product coming

out of the exhaust pipe. We could have said a lot about the car that would have helped to communicate this wider issue that I think is the war, the real war that we still haven't won yet. And we still haven't got a strategy for winning that war. How do we actually come up with a very fundamentally different economic system and a fundamentally different politics, that really bring this to environment and social justice? We haven't yet got a strategy.

CHARLES SECRETT Roger said a lot of really correct and accurate things about dynamics within the direct action movement, and in terms of relationship to mainstream NGO efforts, and several times referred to Friends of the Earth, and he referred to Friends of the Earth, and the change in relationship from, you know, initially suspicious and at a distance and critical to positive and engaging. That was quite right, what he said, so I want to make sure that goes onto the record.

JAMES MCKAY I want to bring Robin in at this point. Clearly ideologically and tactically, there are great differences with what Roger is discussing, and the approach of the rest of the movement. How far is there a departure in this direct action, or would you see a continuity with the controversies you were discussing in the 1980s in terms of what mobilises people?

ROBIN GROVE-WHITE Well, I think that there's always been this tension between direct action and other sorts of campaigning or pressure. I'll just refer to the very dramatic interventions in the early 1970s, the public enquiries by John Tyme which were very, very big, and the tensions around the walkers motorway programme in the mid-70s were very considerable.* But, certainly CPRE didn't want anything to do with John Tyme. And yet, you know, individually, they may have appreciated him. There's a great difficulty in this discussion, frankly, about the spectrum of organisations and subcultures that are represented here, as well as the range of periods.

John Tyme was an anti-road protester, and lecturer at the University of Sheffield.

JULIA HAILES I think there is a bit of a divide, because there is a very strong socialist dimension to the environmental movement, a sort of anti-capitalism approach, and not all of us subscribe to that approach. In fact, the whole concept of green consumerism was trying to get environmental issues to be a part of mainstream business thinking. And I think in that concept, we did achieve something, in that most major corporations now are addressing environmental issues. They're not necessarily doing enough, not all the vision and change that's needed. But I think rather than necessarily being anti-business, one could actually say that many of us of today's campaigners are actually working in business and changing what they're doing, and I think that symbolises the great success, which started predominantly in the 1980s.

CHARLES SECRETT Julia, do you think I'm a Leftie?

(Laughter)

JULIA HAILES I'm afraid I do a bit.

(Laughter)

STEPHEN JOSEPH Just to give Charles a run for his money, let me give you a success that is fundamental, and that's London. If you looked at London in 1970, the place would have looked like Birmingham, because it was going to have massive motorways all over it. And then the GLC, in the 1980s, created an alternative vision for what that could look like, alongside constant resistance of people in the 1980s against road building. And then, you have the consensus, during the 1990s, that London needed some proper planning, and ended up with the Greater London Authority, and Transport for London. And just in the sense of real outcomes, you then had a modal shift away from car across the whole of London, of 4 per cent. That doesn't sound much, but it's huge, and as Ken Livingstone has once said, it sets a

pattern for world cities, so you can never say again, 'Well, the model of world cities is Los Angeles, because that's the way the world is going to be.' So I would argue that the movement has had that huge success, which has worldwide implications. And we also defeated the roads lobby, which was a hugely powerful institution in the 1980s, and we've just done the same thing with the aviation lobby, which was reduced to running fringe meetings at the party conferences. Charles might argue completely rightly, that these are probably temporary successes, because they will regroup, and furthermore, they will be back in ten years' time. But nonetheless, these are real successes which changed the political culture, and we shouldn't neglect those things.

Plane Stupid, a direct action group campaigning against aviation expansion, www.planestupid.com

We haven't mentioned Plane Stupid at all, by the way.* One of the two founders of Plane Stupid works for the Campaign for Better Transport, and the other one works for Greenpeace. And so the migration from direct action groups to mainstream groups is very important.

CHARLES SECRETT You know, London is a success on a grand scale as a growing city. I mean, I worked as a special advisor to Ken [Livingstone] for four years on climate change and sustainability. And you're absolutely right. My question is, how do we build up all the individual successes so that they create a critical mass at a national and a global level, and do so in time? And that's the lesson that I think we still have to learn. I still think that most of our successes as an NGO movement, are tactical, they're not strategic. I think what London under Livingstone has shown how they can be strategic. And the climate change action plan that London came up with, to demonstrate how an economy as big as London is, could reduce carbon issues by 60 per cent by 2025, and 90 per cent by 2050, is an absolute model for anyone, anywhere. Unfortunately, Boris* dumped it.

Boris Johnson, Major of London, 2007-.

SARA PARKIN I feel particularly strongly, down those years, as somebody who was also involved in the women's movement, that the Left has totally

failed both the women's movement, and the environment movement, and I find it really upsetting that there hasn't been a better sort of coming together of quite a lot of common goals that we shared. It has to be said that in supporting the Green Party here, NGOs could have multiplied their influence, as all politicians care about is the pressure on the ballot box. What better way to put pressure on everybody's ballot box by building up the Green Party?

CHARLES SECRETT

Petra Kelly (1947–1992), one of the founders of Die Grünen, the German Green Party in 1979.

My favourite political expression was something from Petra Kelly,* asked what she thought that the basis of the strategy had to be? She said, 'Neither left nor right, but forward.' And that to me, sums up the challenge of what humanity has got to get to grips with, in forging this new economics, and new politics.

JAMES MCKAY

Thank you very much to the panel, and to the audience as well.