

THE COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE Voice of the Rural Dispossessed?

The Countryside Alliance hadn't even been formally established when it held a 50,000 strong demonstration in central London in July 1997. [1] What united the groups involved in organising the march was their opposition to an anticipated ban on hunting with dogs under the then New Labour government of Tony Blair. As Labour peer Baroness Mallalieu QC said at the rally in Hyde Park which followed the demonstration "Hunting is our music, it is our poetry, it is our art, it is our pleasure." [2] Meanwhile Tory MPs queued up to speak to their followers and they were cheered and applauded widely.

Despite the impressive turn-out, it is likely that the 'Countryside Alliance' would never have been any more than a pro-hunt group of minimal importance to anyone not interested in the debate. However its appearance coincided with an accelerating crisis in farming and rural communities generally, and it has been able to capitalise on this to gain support among a much wider audience than just hunting enthusiasts.

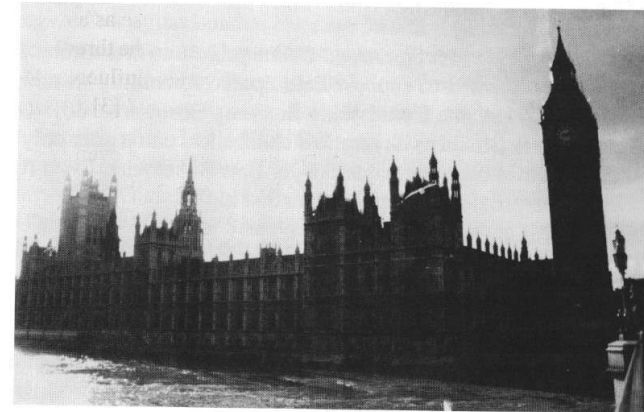
In essence The Countryside Alliance has been astute enough to realise that it needed to show some concern about genuine rural grievances in order to gain a much larger audience for its pro-hunting views. As such its propaganda for the July 11th 1997 march and rally said "This initiative arose as a response to the frustration and concern felt by country people against the threats posed to the countryside, and the jobs, by politicians and urban influence, through prejudice, ignorance, and diminishing rural representation" [3]

Alongside the claim that without hunting things will get even worse The Countryside Alliance have adopted strategies that have disguised the core interests of the Alliance. The result has been that its views have become more and more acceptable and has begun to be taken quite seriously by many as an authoritative voice on rural issues, even those with which they have little connection, for example social exclusion.

These strategies have included:

- a gradual change of board members and key figures to move the peers and large landowners to more behind-the-scenes roles,

- the appointment of some non-hunting officers to give the impression of being a broad-based movement with all rural issues at its heart,
 - encouraging hunt supporters to join organisations such as the National Trust and RSPCA, in order to make hunting acceptable among more people, but also to narrow the gap between the Alliance's own position and the position taken by organisations which are deemed by large numbers of the public to be respectable and moderate. [4]
 - presenting foxhunting as an issue of traditional civil liberties, whereby those living in the countryside are encouraged to see themselves as a victimised minority.
1. *It was not formally set up until the following year, but the groups initially came together under this title to organise the 10/07/1997 demo.*
 2. *Daily Telegraph 11.07/1997 and Countryside Alliance Website.*
 3. *March to Hyde Park Mission Statement, G" section of The Guardian 10.7.97.*
 4. *Richard Meade, Olympic Gold Medal winner for three-day eventing, was expelled from the RSPCA after being accused of spearheading a campaign to infiltrate the society with hundreds of hunting supporters – 'The Countryman's Weekly' 29/06/2001.*



Will Parliament be allowed to ban foxhunting?

In fact, The Countryside Alliance is part of the problem and as such cannot be part of the solution. It should be opposed for several reasons:

- Obviously, **it supports hunting** and other cruel sports.
- It claims to care about all aspects of rural life, yet its structure, origins, membership and staff suggest otherwise: **It remains an organisation to defend field sports.** (See below)
- It claims to speak for 'the countryside'. In fact, **it speaks for the leisure interests of the landed gentry and assorted business people.**
- **Its proclamations about how hard times are for rural people are fairly shameless** considering the role that landowners and business people have played in making sure that times stay as hard as possible for the peasantry. The Countryside Alliance is part of the problem, not the solution.
- Its **funding and investments** show a high degree of **hypocrisy** (see over)
- Its **staff** have several **conflicts of interest** (see below)

Structure

The Countryside Alliance is, formally, an amalgamation of three groups: the **British Field Sports Society**, the **Countryside Movement** and the **Countryside Business Group**, but it is the name "British Field Sports Society Investments Ltd." which appears in the annual accounts, alongside "Countryside Alliance" [1], suggesting that the amalgamation may not have taken place on very equal terms.

Indeed, the Countryside Movement and Countryside Business Group appear only to have been formed to support field sports. According to a briefing prepared for the CPHA, the Countryside Business Group was at first called the **Country Sports Business Group**, but changed its name after only a few weeks [2]. American-born corporate lawyer Eric Bettelheim, (with the aim of raising funds to protect field sports) founded it.

Bettelheim is qualified to practice law in both the UK and the USA, and is a consultant for **Mishcon de Reya**, where his Countryside Alliance chum **John Jackson** is also employed. According to Bettelheim's potted biography on the Mishcon De Reya website, he specialises in the regulation of financial institutions, derivatives, managed funds, cross-border transactions, and commercial dispute arbitration, venture and development capital. He is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and he is the author of over 40 publications and principal editor of three texts dealing with swaps, futures

and commodity products, none of which seems to suggest that he has the concerns of the rural poor at heart. [3] His approach to fundraising seems to have been quite unsuccessful: The Countryside Business Group aimed to persuade businesses which would be threatened by the demise of bloodsports to donate 1.5 per cent of their annual turnover to the cause of defending them, as well as imposing a voluntary national game levy, for example £3 per day for salmon anglers, or 27 p per pheasant. [4] The CBG fell well short of its fundraising targets, however. Perhaps the irony of some of Britain's richest people trying to solicit protection money from small businesses and individuals was not lost on those who did not pay up.

The Countryside Movement was founded in November 1995, supposedly as a group to campaign on rural issues other than bloodsports. **Sir**, now **Lord**, **David Steel** was its first chairman, and received £93,752 for his efforts. [5] His position on hunting was mixed:

"If I were confronted with an opinion poll and asked to tick a box to approve or disapprove hunting, I would have to say that I disapprove, but that is not the point. The point is whether I use my vote in the House of Commons to ban an activity in which I personally do not wish to take part when others might use their votes to ban activities in which I do wish to take part." [6]

Angling, for example. [7]

Other leading lights in the Countryside Movement were more directly in favour of hunting. At the first two inaugural meetings, those present included **Max Hastings**, editor of the London Evening Standard (a keen shooter and angler, and Vice President of the Game Conservancy Trust), [8] **Earl Peel**, Chairman of the Game Conservancy Trust; the **Duke of Westminster**, then President of the Game Conservancy Trust and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation; and **Hugh Van Cutsem**, shoot owner and head of the Countryside Business Group (CBG). The Countryside Movement's Board of Directors also included **Robin Hanbury-Tenison** OBE, then Chief Executive of the British Field Sports Society and **John Swift**, then Chief Executive of the British Association of Shooting and Conservation. [9]

The most obvious influence of the BFSS and the Countryside Business Group on the Movement came from funding. Any pretence that the Countryside Movement was a separate body totally disappears with the revelation that the CBG provided £550 000 towards the set-up and development of the organisation and that the BFSS provided £250 000. [10] In addition, the Movement's main activity, other than advertising itself, seems to have been

collecting people's names and addresses for its database. This was done in a fairly underhand manner, with National Farmers' Union members' addresses being passed on without their knowledge or consent. Not only that, but the Countryside Movement had registered the BFSS as a recipient of its database, even though many were no doubt against hunting and had joined up because of concern at the state of the countryside in general. [11]

It can be safely said that if The Countryside Alliance had decided to defend hunting by revealing the names of who was behind it and who was financing it then the vast majority who in opinion poll after poll had expressed their wish to see hunting with dogs done away would probably have hardened their opposition. Much easier was to keep this information hidden, present a more acceptable face and pretend to be concerned about issues which affect not just those in the countryside but in all areas of Britain – issues such as a lack of affordable housing, jobs, children's future, transport.

Just as fascists in the BNP are forced to take up some elements of working class people's social conditions and problems to gain support, before giving them a reactionary and right wing direction so those who formed The Countryside Alliance have sought to employ similar methods to get a hearing. Hence The Countryside Alliance even went as far as launching its own "campaign for rural rights" [press release 16.10.97] in late 1997, only a few months before figures released on 30.01.98 revealed that there had been a 50% fall in farm incomes in 1997.

In the intervening period, on Friday November 28th 1997 to be exact, Parliament voted by a massive majority for a ban on foxhunting.

Strangely, two days later The Mail in Sunday even went so far as suggesting Prince Charles was going to quit hunting, aiming no doubt at trying to trick the public into believing that the Royals are not arrogant and really do listen to public opinion. Bear in mind that this was only months after Princess Diana's death. By December 16th Prince William and Prince Harry were watching a hunt at which Camilla Parker Bowles was riding the first time they'd been seen together in public.

Two weeks later, Baroness Ann Mallalieu QC, the new President of the Countryside Alliance, writing in 'The Field' magazine of January 1998 said that those involved "include not just field sportsmen of all kinds but those who own and manage most of the countryside. The National Farmers' Union, the Country Landowners Association [who according to their own web-site

own 60% of land in England and Wales], the NFU of Wales, the Scottish Landowners and even organisations like the National Park Communities are powerful voices".

Despite clearly being an organisation set up by, consisting of, financed by, staffed by and run by major landowners and the extremely rich [of which more below] this did not stop the Countryside Alliance displaying a sickening degree of hypocrisy in its defence of hunting putting forward the view that they are a defenceless minority under attack. This continues to this day.

They have continuously presented hunters as the real countryside managers who are responsible for no brutality and as defenders of working people's jobs, homes and futures. They have even gone as far as using the language of the Civil Rights movement with their "we seek from urban British society more tolerance – and a willingness to listen to us" [*Horse and Hound* 8.1.98 page 41]

'Listen to us' has been the rallying cry amongst poor, hard done sections of society. Those in The Countryside Alliance do not, under any circumstances constitute this. Neither has anyone in a leading position ever displayed such qualities for other actually oppressed groups – a bottle of champagne to anyone who can prove otherwise! No, two bottles. In fact, a crate of the stuff...

Whilst 'The Countryside Alliance' has made quite serious attempts to present itself as an organisation which is much wider than bloodsports a look at its structure reminds us that the changes have been largely cosmetic. Its departments are as follows:

PR-----	020 7840 9220
Membership-----	020 7840 9240
Political-----	020 7840 9260
Policy-----	020 7840 9250
Campaign for Hunting-----	020 7840 9210
Foresight: Campaign for Shooting-----	020 7840 9235
Campaign for Falconry-----	020 7840 9200
Gone fishing: Countryside Alliance initiative for Angling-----	020 7840 9274
Country Sports & Political Hotline-----	07774 236101
Honest Food: Campaign for Independent Food-----	020 7840 9219

Figure * ARABIC 1: Departmental Contact Details for Countryside Alliance, www.countryside-alliance.org/alliance/contact.htm

Its departmental contact details betray a distinct bias towards bloodsports, with the campaigns apparently not devoted to bloodsports being vague and undefined. There is not even any section of the website (www.countryside-alliance.org), as of March 28th 2002, devoted to the Honest Food campaign.

In fact between July 18th 2000 when 'Honest Food' welcomed the 'EU proposals that could save rural abattoirs' [12] and March 27th 2002 with its 'welcomes vote in House of Lords as a "triumph of sanity"' [13], a reference to the Lords postponement of a detailed discussion of the Animal Health Bill until all enquiries into foot and mouth are completed, there was not one peep from the 'Honest Food' campaign.

During that time the Countryside Alliance issued more press releases about the need for children to be taught how to shoot. See for example Campaign for Shooting press release of July 18th 2001 announcing 'lessons at the CLA Game Fair' [14] with reduced prices of £5 for under 18s.

Where?

The Countryside Alliance's address is:

**The Old Town Hall,
367 Kennington Road,
London. SE11 4PT.
tel - 020 7840 9200
fax - 020 7793 8484
e-mail - info@countryside-alliance.org**



Since May 2001, what was the events office has been made into the Commercial Directorate, which is based in Marlborough, Wilts, and is headed by Roger Loodmer.

Who?

The current **Board of Directors [as of 29/03/02]** consists of:

John Jackson - Chairman
Bill Andrewes – Deputy Chairman
Richard Burge – Chief Executive
Lord Mancroft
Maurice Askew
Prof. Caroline Tisdall
Robert Waley-Cohen
Charles Wilson
David Reynolds
Bob James
Mark Firth
Sam Butler

Given that at least nine of these twelve people are involved in bloodsports, we should not give too much credence to the Countryside Alliance's pretensions of being a broad-based organisation concentrating on a wide range of rural issues. None of these people have expertise in e.g. food policy or social exclusion, and some are actively involved in perpetuating rural poverty, for example by selling overpriced homes to commuters.

John Jackson

This ridiculously busy man cannot possibly have enough brain-space left to think coherently about the countryside: He is Non-Solicitor Chairman of law firm Mishcon de Reya, Chairman of Ladbroke Group, and Celltech plc.; A Director of Billiton plc, Wyndeham Press Group plc., WPP Group plc., Xenova Group plc., Brown and Jackson plc., and Oxford Technology Venture Capital Trust; Special Advisor to the Korda Seed Capital Fund and Cambridge Animation Systems Ltd.; and one of the four owners of History Today. [15] His original involvement with the Countryside Alliance was through the Countryside Business Group. [16]

Bill Andrewes

Definitely a hunting enthusiast, Bill Andrewes was with the BFSS, before becoming Chairman of the Campaign for Hunting. Having been elected Vice-Chair of the CA Board, he relinquished his other position. [17]

Richard Burge

A zoologist and former Director General of the Zoological Society of London, colonel's son Richard Burge is also a Member of the Labour Party. He is a trustee for the Television Trust For The Environment and of the Charles Darwin Centre. He also sits on the council of the Shropshire and West Midlands Agricultural Society. [18] His appointment as Chief Executive is said to have caused consternation in some quarters, particularly after an interview in the Spectator, in which he said that he would take a job from anybody, had never hunted, and that the Countryside Alliance would survive without hunting. [19]

Lord Mancroft

Tory peer Lord Mancroft was Deputy Chairman of the BFSS [20], and is chairman of Inter Lotto UK Ltd. [21]

Maurice Askew

Maurice Askew has been associated with the Union of Country Sports Workers and is or has been Master of the Barlow Hunt in Derbyshire. [22] He is quoted as threatening that "We are fighting for liberty and freedom. My warning for Mr Blair is that if he does not listen to us there will be a civil war in this country, the like we have never seen since the days of Cromwell and Fairfax." [23]

Prof. Caroline Tisdall

Formerly a Guardian journalist, Caroline Tisdall is now Professor of the Department of Rural Future at Oxford Brookes University. She shoots, angles, stalks, hawks and "would die in a ditch to defend hunting". [24]

Robert Waley-Cohen

Owner of a healthcare company, Robert Waley-Cohen has been a steward for The Jockey Club, (also associated with the Jockey Club are fellow CA board member **Charles Wilson**, Christopher Sporborg, a Countryside Alliance director, and the Duke of Roxburghe [25] and **Lord Vestey** [26], donors to the CA) is a racehorse owner and is organiser of Upton House Horse Trials. [27] He was an executive of Christies Auctioneers (UK and US) from 1969-1981, and in 1983 founded Alliance Imaging Inc., the largest out-sourced radiology department in the US, followed by Alliance Medical Ltd., the largest out-sourced radiology department in Europe. He is also a trustee of the

Countryside Foundation for Education, a member of the National Trust, and the Country Landowners Association (due to being a partner in a farm on land surrounding Upton House in Warwickshire) [28]

Charles Wilson

Charles Wilson is a former Managing Editor of **Mirror Group Plc**; former Editor of **The Times** a Trustee World Wide Fund for Nature UK and a member of the Jockey Club. [29]

David Reynolds

Master of the Woodland Pytchley Hunt, David Reynolds is so keen to defend hunting that according to the East Northants. Anti-Bloodsports, he has tried to ride over saboteurs on a number of occasions. [30]

Bob James

A well-known angler, Bob James is Chairman of the Countryside Alliance's Gone Fishing Campaign.

Mark Firth

Chair of Foresight, the Countryside Alliance's Campaign for Shooting, Mark Firth is Joint Managing Director of Roxton Bailey Robinson sporting agents. He participates in shooting, fishing, stalking and other country sports in the UK and worldwide. [31]

Sam Butler

Chairman of the Countryside Alliance's Campaign for Hunting, Master of Warwickshire Hunt and partner in estate agent Butler-Sherborn, Sam Butler is a particularly badly-placed person to be a leading light on an organisation which claims to care about rural communities. His estate agents sell extremely pricey homes to rich folk, with not a hope of the locals being able to afford them. Nick Cohen of the Observer phoned Butler-Sherborne posing as a cash buyer for a remarkably over-priced Cotswold pad. On expressing concern that he could face hostility for being a townie, the saleswoman replied 'Oh no, everyone round here's a commuter.' [32]

Butler made rather a fool of himself by bellowing without a blush to a demonstration outside the Labour Party Conference: 'Our forefathers didn't fight Hitler to have this lot take away our liberties.' One of Butler's forefathers was 'Rab' Butler, who certainly didn't fight Hitler. He appeased him throughout the Thirties and then aided Lord Halifax's manoeuvres to force Churchill to bring about a negotiated surrender in 1940. [33]

President - Baroness Anne Mallalieu QC

A Labour peer and great fan of hunting: "Hunting is our music. It is our poetry. It is our art. It is our pleasure. It is where many of our best friendships are made. It is our community. It is our whole way of life." [34]

Deputy President - Lord Marcus Kimball

Educated at Eton and Cambridge, Lord Kimball has been Director of the Royal Trust Bank, External Member of the Council of Lloyds, and Tory MP for Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. He has been Huntmaster of the Fitzwilliam Hounds and Cottesmore Hounds, and frequents Whites and Pratt's gentlemen's clubs. [35]

Commercial Directors

Christopher Sporborg

A banker who lives on a farm in Hertfordshire [36]. One wonders what happened to the farmer...

Michael Hoare

A banker from London. [37] A real yokel then...

Nick Bannister

A stockbroker from London. [38] Hmm.

Secretary: Roger Loodmer

An angler from London.

Also of interest is that out of the Countryside Alliance's token five pounds' worth of shares, one is held by **Andrew Salvesen**, who was a Non-executive Director of **Christian Salvesen plc.** between 1989 and the demerger in September 1997, when he was appointed to the Board of **Aggreko plc.** He had more than 20 years' with Christian Salvesen, including being Managing Director of Christian Salvesen's former Oilfield Technology operations.

He is a Non-executive Director of **Smedvig ASA** and **Stirling Shipping Ltd** as well as being Chairman of **Robertson Research Holdings Limited**, **Canvas Holidays Limited** and **Roxar ASA.** [39] Quite what expertise about the countryside this has given him is unclear.

Who Else?

Who funds the Countryside Alliance?

A document leaked to The Observer revealed a number of donors to the Alliance. They include:

Prince Charles, who lent his house for a cocktail party

Sir Hardy Amies, the Queen's dressmaker

Lord Vestey, the meat tycoon and polo playing chum of Charles who is page of honour to the Queen.

Marquess of Hartington, chairman of the British Horseracing Board and the Queen's representative of Ascot.

Sir Christopher Bland, Chair of the BBC

Duke of Northumberland [40] – one of Britain's richest men with 132,300 acres who caused controversy by riding roughshod over local opinion by planning to build executive homes in Chatton on his estate. [41]

The Duke Of Westminster – Britain's richest man, with an estimated fortune of £4 Billion, gets £3,000,000 in farm subsidies per year for his farm near Chester, [42] is a member of the **Country Land and Business Association** (CLA, formerly the Country Landowners' Association), was one of the original board members of the **Countryside Movement** [43] and has been the President of the **Game Conservancy Trust** and the **British Association for Shooting and Conservation.** He is reported to have helped out the Countryside Movement with a £1 million-pound 'loan'. [44]

He was also on the Countryside Alliance's board until a 1998 re-shuffle in order to make themselves look less like the voice of the landed gentry [45], and is one of the Countryside Alliance's main funders, though rumours that he is the 'anonymous benefactor' who provided its offices were denied by the Alliance. [46]

Sir Robert McAlpine, construction company

Sunley Holdings, construction company

Persimmon Homes [47] home-building company. In a stunning piece of hypocrisy, the Countryside Alliance on one hand expresses concern about the

destruction of greenfield land and recognises that “the problems caused by this type of development extend far beyond the obvious destruction of attractive countryside and wildlife habitat,” [48] yet on the other hand are funded by those who are responsible for this destruction.

Who Does The Countryside Alliance Support?

Shares:

Yet more double standards are apparent in the CA’s investments. It has more than £40,000 worth of shares in Barclays Bank, which caused a storm last year by closing 171 rural branches. [49] On one hand the Alliance is campaigning against these moves, whilst on the other, financially supporting them. Likewise, it holds £30,000 worth of investments in **Shell**, [50] whilst backing the oil protests in 2000 and simultaneously claiming to care about the environment, and also holds large investments in super-polluter **ICI** and ethically-challenged mining company **Rio Tinto**, not to mention arms and tobacco companies. [51]

PR and lobbying company PPS Group Ltd.

The Countryside Alliance’s choice of PR and lobbying company is particularly noteworthy. **Political Planning Services Ltd.** may not be big, but it carries disproportionate weight, consisting of individuals who have worked closely with politicians in the past. Again, a great conflict of interest is present in the Countryside Alliance’s support for this company, since it specialises in trying to get through controversial planning applications. On its web page, it even boasted about helping US pharmaceuticals giant **Pfizer** to get planning permission for a new UK headquarters on greenbelt land! [52]

Past clients include **McDonalds, Morrisons, Orange, Tesco** and **Sainsbury’s**, not noted for their ecological thinking, nor for their equitable treatment of farmers, nor for their contribution to healthy local economies. [53] Through its support of PPS, the Countryside Alliance supports abuse of the planning system, whereby those who have money pay for lobbyists to get them round the planning laws, and cover the countryside with community-killing sprawl, whilst those who do not have difficulty getting permission to build themselves a single home and also bear the brunt of increased traffic, community decay and increasingly mind-numbing jobs. Likewise, being a specialist in controversial planning applications, PPS has over 20 home-building, construction and quarrying companies on its client list [54], and the Countryside Alliance supports this whilst at the same time expressing concern

about the destruction of the countryside. Lastly, concerning PPS, it is worth noting that **Mark Pendlington**, former managing director at PPS Group, is now Chief Executive of the **Country Land and Business Association (CLA)**, bringing out yet more cosy links between landowners, big business and manipulation of government. [55]

The future

By the time this booklet is printed the Countryside Alliance will have already announced when it is planning to march in London.



The Times – Thursday March 28th 2002

Our challenge is to make sure that people know it is an organisation for the defence of bloodsports, not an organisation which can address the wider problems of diminishing incomes for rural people, not an organisation which will stop the countryside being covered in concrete and pollutants, and not an organisation which will devote any significant resources to improving the quality of our food.

On one hand the Countryside Alliance says it cares about social exclusion, on

the other hand, its staff consists of bankers and landlords who specialise in the unequal distribution of wealth, and its shareholders perpetuate this.

On one hand it says it is concerned with the fate of the whole countryside, on the other hand it devotes scarcely any resources to non-bloodsports issues.

On one hand, it expresses concern about the environment, on the other hand its staff and donors are busily covering the land in overpriced housing and its shareholders and PR company are facilitating this.

People who care about the countryside must show the Countryside Alliance up for the fraud that it is, and must break its virtual monopoly as the 'voice of the countryside'.

- [1] Countryside Alliance, Annual Report and Accounts 2000, p. 19-24
- [2] Stewart, Ben, (Campaign for the Protection of Hunted Animals), The Countryside Alliance – a Briefing, unpublished
- [3] http://www.mishcon.co.uk/fir/fir_d/fir_d_peop/fir_d_peop30.htm , last viewed 22nd June 2001
- [4] "Rural Lobby Takes Aim At Theme Park Britain", Times,
- [5] Select Committee on Standards and Privileges Twelfth Report, Annex A, (letter to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards from Mr Dale Campbell-Savours MP), HMSO, 10 February 1998, including excerpt from Countryside Movement Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 1997.
- [6] House of Commons Hansard Debates for March 3rd 1995, www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/199495/cmhansrd/1995-03-03/Debate-3.html
- [7] *ibid*
- [8] http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:u5RtOK_jg5M:www.panmacmillan.com/AV/MaxHastings.htm+%22Max+Hastings%22&hl=en , last viewed 25th June 2001.
- [9] Say, Judy, "So What is The Countryside Movement Up To?" www.oneworld.org/tio/research/le3say.html
- [10] Stewart, Ben, (Campaign for the Protection of Hunted Animals), The Countryside Alliance – a Briefing, unpublished
- [11] *Ibid*
- [12] www.countryside-alliance.org/news/latest/00/000718honest.htm
- [13] www.countryside-alliance.org/news/02/020327hone.htm
- [14] www.countryside-alliance.org/news/01/010718camp.htm
- [15] www.mishcon.co.uk
- [16] "Guardian of the Land", Horse and Hound, 15th February, p10
- [17] "Board Changes at Countryside Alliance", Press release, Countryside Alliance, 7th July 1998

- [18] Who's Who 2000, A and C Black, London 2000, p291
- [19] Gone to Claridge's", The Spectator, 20th January 2001
- [20] RSPCA Head 'Enlisted Hunters', Times Wednesday May 2nd 2001
- [21] "Next Step Forward for the Countryside Alliance", Press release, Countryside Alliance, 26th March 1998, <http://www.countryside-alliance.org/news/latest/980326sgm.htm>
- [22] "Countryside 'army' descend on Labour", This is London, September 29th 1999
- [23] Maurice Askew of the Country Sports Workers at the Welsh Countryside March and Rally, Western Mail, November 11th 1999
- [24] Caroline Tisdall, potted biography for Countryside Alliance Board elections 2001.
- [25] Prince's Aide Revives Row Over GM Food, The Guardian, 28th September 1999.
- [26] Prince named as secret backer of hunt lobby, The Guardian, 26th September 1999.
- [27] British Endurance-Riding Association, Latest News March 2000, http://www.british-endurance.org.uk/ghr_pressnews.html , last viewed 9th July 2001
- [28] www.countrysidefoundation.org.uk/WhatisCFE/Trustees/RW-Cmain.htm
- [29] "Next step forward for the Countryside Alliance, 26th March 1998, www.countryside-alliance.org/news/latest/980326sgm.htm
- [30] East Northamptonshire Anti-BloodSports News, December 2nd 2000 www.northantshsa.org.uk/news.htm "Hunt Master hospitalises Saboteur" Kettering Hunt Saboteurs news release 11th February 1995
- [31] "New Chairman For Campaign For Shooting and Alliance Shooting Committee", Press Release, Countryside Alliance, 21st June 1999
- [32] "Is it Hair or Blague?", The Observer, 31st December 2000
- [33] Unholy Alliance, The Observer, 15th October 2000
- [34] Baroness Mallalieu's speech at the Hyde Park Rally, later repeated in her submission to the Hunting Inquiry <http://www.huntinginquiry.gov.uk/evidence/baronessmallalieu.htm>
- [35] Who's Who 2000, A and C Black, London, p.1139
- [36] Countryside Alliance Annual Return 2000
- [37] *ibid*.
- [38] *ibid*.
- [39] <http://production.investis.com/aggreko/board/> last viewed 9th July 2001
- [40] "Prince Named As Secret Backer Of Hunt Lobby", The Observer, 26th September 1999
- [41] "Tenants Revolt Over Duke's Homes Plan", Daily Express, 10th February 2000.
- [42] "Revealed: How Britain's Richest Man Takes A £3m Tax Hand-Out, The Observer, 20th May 2001
- [43] "Rural Lobby Takes Aim At Theme Park Britain", The Times, 17th November 1995

- [44] "Back In The Hunt", The Guardian, 4th October 2000.
- [45] "Country Alliance Seeks New Image", The Times, 4th April 1998
- [46] Anonymous source, June 2001
- [47] Stewart, Ben, (Campaign for the Protection of Hunted Animals), The Countryside Alliance – a Briefing, unpublished.
- [48] E.g. www.countryside-alliance.org.uk/country/development.htm , last viewed 9th July 2001
- [49] "Fury Over Rural Lobby's Shares" The Observer, 29th April 2001
- [50] Ibid.
- [51] Ibid.
- [52] www.ppsgroup.co.uk, this claim was removed from their web-site following a re-vamping in early 2001
- [53] www.ppsgroup.co.uk – as of March 28th 2002
- [54] Ibid
- [55] "New Chief Executive Announced For CLA", CLA Press Release, 23rd January 2001 <http://194.200.85.11/sources/27/171/4015965/01009HQ.htm>

Information required on 367 Kennington Road, London SE11 4QT

Records checked at the Land Registry on April 2nd 2002 revealed that the property occupied by The Countryside Alliance at 367 Kennington Road, London SE11 is owned by Kennington Estates Limited. The company has, in the last six to seven years, had a number of registered addresses. The latest one is Sue Smith Accountancy, First Floor, 134 Oatlands Drive, Oatlands Village, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9HJ [company no 02998334]

The company has three directors – Catherine Rachel Leigh Wood [secretary] of 35 Kensington Gardens, London W2 4BQ, Gideon Andrew Leigh Wood of the same address and Philip Adam Leigh Wood of 85 Kensington Gardens, London. They are directors in 70, 31 and 33 different companies respectively, including Kennington Estates Limited.

Interestingly, the sole shareholder, Kintyre Limited, of PO Box 175, 78 Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3DE does not seem to exist any more.

Thanks to Red-Star-Research for this information.

If anyone has any further information on these companies or individuals then it would be gratefully received.

NEITHER GREEN NOR PLEASANT

The Politics of The Countryside Alliance

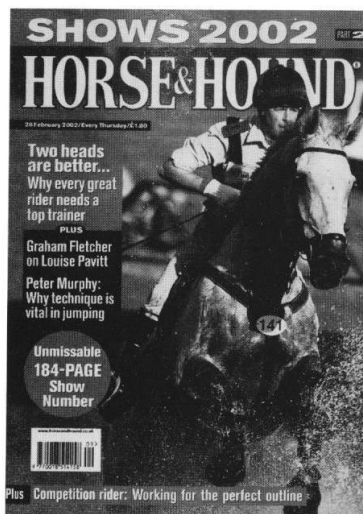
The Countryside Alliance is a many-headed hydra and simplistic or one-sided characterisations of it will never represent its true essence. There is however more than circumstantial evidence that indicates that underneath the respectable leadership there is the usual 'urban' mixture of nationalists and racists. In the countryside there are even less restraints on people's behaviour and coupled with the isolation from experiences of integration this produces a volatile cocktail that can and has fostered physical and verbal racism.

It is well documented about how the organised fascist groups regard the campaign for hunting - they see it as fertile recruiting ground and claim to have many friends and allies in the fieldsports fraternity. What is less well known is the extent of racism in the countryside and whether it is growing or not. Some farmers have, of course, been willing to use slave labour and some have been prosecuted for employing refugees illegally on starvation wages. In fact, paying low wages and exploiting workers is a major 'countryside tradition' as landowners and farmers have never been well known for being benevolent. The Transport and General Workers Union Rural workers branch says that pay is historically poor in the countryside - like the health and safety record as well. [1]

Context

As we have seen earlier in this booklet foxhunting has evolved in the context of tight laws controlling game and can't be divorced from the power structure. There was no revolution that disposed of the Royals and aristocracy unlike in France, which simultaneously abolished the game laws and distributed the land as well as chopping off the heads of the privileged.

"Horse and Hound" magazine is the bible for hunting people and it has been going since 1884. Currently it serves as the mouthpiece of the Countryside Alliance as there is a direct connection between the editor and the leadership of the Countryside Alliance. In its early editions it spoke freely of "the niggers in Ceylon" [May 10th 1884 edition] and "when, will the authorities learn that the Celts are like niggers and curs, only amenable to the lash" [Dec. 20th 1884 edition] Of course, they've never retracted any of this nonsense. The



pheasant — or is that peasant - strangler of Windsor, otherwise known as the Queen — calls “Horse and Hound”, “my paper”. The Queen, of course, has been photographed on 2 occasions recently wringing birds necks...

The Countryside Alliance is trying to position itself as the defenders of British liberty protecting minority interests using the language of civil rights — but this is glossing over the overwhelming weight of evidence to the contrary. Countryside people have been in a minority since the urban population outstripped the rural in 1830, but this didn't stop them literally **lording** it over us till the hereditary

principle was finally challenged in the House of Lords in 1999 — and some of them are still lording it. The evidence also shows that these people have historically persecuted the **real countryside minorities**, the gypsies, and more recently the travellers on the streets and in legislation.

Invented Tradition

The idea that organised foxhunting with dogs is a real countryside tradition is a misnomer, it is a continually propagated myth that carries for them, some political weight. For example, the Duke of Beaufort writing in his book (Fox-Hunting) says, “hunting is a very important part of the tradition of our countryside — part of our whole heritage in fact.” (P. 181) Unfortunately for them the historical facts are not in their favour. These myths are demolished earlier in this booklet and so we do not propose to go over them again except to say we agree with Sir W. Beach Thomas, a pro-foxhunter when he comments:

“...it is true enough in essentials to argue that hunting as we know it began in the eighteenth century and belongs to modern England... The Enclosure acts encouraged it by destroying other sports, especially the hunting of deer... in 1779... [there were] fewer than a dozen regular hunts”. (pages 9 & 10)

Furthermore the Master of Foxhounds Association only dates from 1856 when

24 Masters got together to form a committee. There we have it then, organised foxhunting was not part of the life of the mass of country people till very late on in the 19th century.

For those taking part there was very little concern for the ordinary person in the countryside:

“few of them appear to have been aware that Melton Mowbrey in Leicestershire which is the historical home of foxhunting] was the centre of one of the most depressed of all rural areas and that, for lack of food and fuel, the problem of survival was the daily obsession of half of the Leicestershire countryside”

*E.W. Bovill — who appears to be a **right wing** historian, P. 203.*

Also:

“the gentry's particular delight was foxhunting and this developed into much more than a mere sporting pastime to become a celebration of the hierarchy of country society, cementing the division of rural class relationships. It created a following which embraced all social classes while providing the country gentry and squirearchy with a convenient excuse for coming together and sharing the same consuming mystique. In so doing the hunt served a similar function to the London season, even offering a parallel set of rituals and taboos in the intricacies of foxhunting etiquette”. (Howard Newby, Page 46, 1979)

If there are any pro-foxhunters or neutrals reading this today we suggest you delve into the history books and find out about the Toffs who ran hunting at the expense of the people. William Cobbett the early 19th century journalist was “genuinely shaken and shocked... by the fate of the young men singled out to be hanged on the same gallows at Winchester — ‘and this for the preservation of game, you will observe. This for the preservation of the sports of the aristocracy... it was a thing never to be forgotten by me’”. The right to go hunting had been inherent in the application of the Game Laws in the 18th and 19th centuries (and before), and this activity united the aristocracy to the landed gentry in common defence of their culture, and forging new alliances within this. Rather **similar to today's activity which attempts to bind the aristocracy to the rural petit bourgeoisie and ‘conservatives’ in a new political force.**

New Racism

Although the Countryside Alliance represents an attempt by the right to simultaneously reproduce itself and to carve out new territory, it has different implications for our struggles, in particular those against racism. What evidence do we have currently of the levels of racist and nationalist ideas within these fractions of the countryside population?

Generally the flight from the city to rural areas has been well documented, and some have called this a “white flight” (*R. MacFarlane. Town and Country Planning. June 1998*). This, coupled with the very English ‘love of tradition’ in the form of romantic notions of Englishness and the English landscape constructed around the exclusion of ‘others’ (*P. Scutt & A. Bonnet, “In Search of England”, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1996*) and we have a snowballing effect of **a number of issues being ideologically represented by a traditional right wing power group - personnel, newspapers & magazines, and their ideologists.**

So issues such as Right to Roam are posited against the Right to Own, equality and justice versus ‘traditional’ values imposed by conquest and maintained by force, Britain versus Europe, Anti Road campaigners versus the More Roads lobby, Anti GM crops/ Agrochemical industry versus more chemicals(!) and so on [*especially apparent in “Another Country” by M. Mosbacher & Digby Anderson, published by right wing think tank The Social Affairs Unit, 1999*] For the right as for the left - **No Issue is a Single Issue.**

The groundwork for the Countryside Alliance was being done as early as 1995 by people like Lord Mancroft, Eric Bettelheim and Robin Page. Page has campaigned for the Referendum Party, spoken at the **“Right Now!”** Christmas 2000 Moan, and writes for “Horse and Hound” with a persecution complex. In the hunting press there is blatant and barely disguised racism, homophobia and nationalism. On the marches they’ve held so far we’ve seen all shades of right wing and fascist opinion. One example of this is the demonstration the Countryside Alliance held at the Labour party conference in September 1999. Amidst the well publicized attendance by the BNP (although I am yet to see evidence that they actually did turn up) the usual assortment of lay rightists turned up. Evidence for this is a photograph published in “Howl” the magazine of the Hunt Saboteurs Association that clearly shows a confederate flag (beloved by the Klu Klux Klan), the Cross of St George and the Union Jack flying within 50 yards of each other - all common flags at fascist gatherings.

Not long after minor Royals, Edward & Sophie Rhys Jones were prepared to meet the leading Austrian fascist Haiders deputy. They and other Royals are well known for foxhunting, including Charles and William; as well as Princess Anne, her daughter, and violent boyfriend. All move in Countryside Alliance circles. Put this all together and we could have a situation being cooked up that resembles the 1930’s. In fact, it was clear that Hague attempted in the

2001 General Election to garner the xenophobic vote helped along by ‘romantic nationalist’ campaigns in the Telegraph (eg. Minette Marrin, “It’s not just foreigners who find Britain a foreign land”, *Telegraph, 10.3.01*)

We should also be aware that the Countryside Alliance has been politically formed by the right as a response to the growth of environmental concerns and the environmental movement. Articles like “A War We Can Win” by Eric Bettelheim (*The Field, Page 9, November 1995*) are good examples of this,

arguing for a conservative all encompassing ‘countryside’ campaign. Other examples are articles by authors like Frederic Forsyth in ‘the Field’ (*“March 18: Be There. Fight For Liberty” page 7, Feb. 2001*) which say in fighting talk, “The day of acquiescence, of timid acceptance, is finally over. The hours of real militancy have come. Gloves are off.” This can be seen as both promoting (far) right wing direct action and it’s political cause, especially when articles like “Memo Warns of violence at hunt protest” (*Paul Waugh, Independent 5.2.01*) say “The Countryside March next month is in danger of being hijacked by violent demonstrators from the ‘provisional wing’ of the Countryside Alliance, its organisers have warned. The march... has become a focus of headline hunting activists furious at plans to ban their sport, according to leaked internal memos”.

The left shouldn’t really have been surprised that the Countryside Alliance has been formed for reasons stated above. There were a national string of previous meetings in 1995 [see *Howl 58, Page 6, Summer 1995 edition*] called “The Countryside United” by the Countryside Movement. These were designed to rally support against the McFall bill to ban foxhunting. The Countryside Movement according to Milbourne [3] is “the voice of traditional power and privilege, of field sports, farming and landed property - a voice which is attempting to re-position and re-establish its vested interests within a rapidly

The Daily Telegraph

Est 1855

The hounding of liberty

Yesterday the Government said that it would ban foxhunting. The suggestion that this way of life may still be licensed in some upland districts does not represent a “middle way”. What is being proposed is a ban, with only the odd exemption here and there, and nobody should be under any illusion about that.

The decision betrays the monstrous cynicism of a government that has said for months that it needed help from “moderate, pro-hunting people” to find a compromise. A great many such people came forward, in good faith, with their suggestions. They have been deceived and insulted. Alas, our warnings that the Government could not be treated with on this have proved correct.

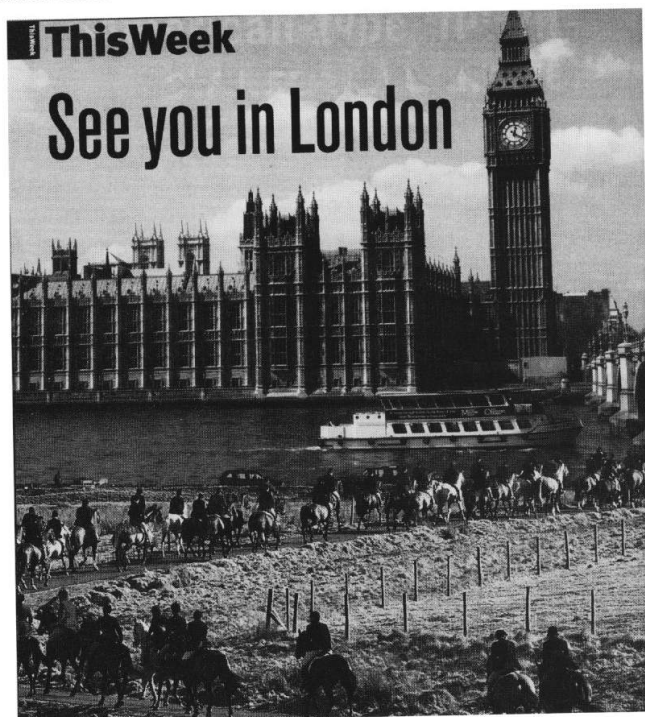
One need only compare *Hansard’s* records of this week’s debates in the Lords and Commons to see how differently the two sides have approached the subject. In the Lords, which voted for a compromise that would allow hunting to continue, all the stress was on the practicalities of a new law and its likely effects. In the Commons, which voted overwhelmingly for a ban, the Labour benches seemed almost completely indifferent to the questions of what laws are for, and how they affect people. Speaker after speaker wasted simply to impose his views on the country. In proposing to invoke the Parliament Act to force through a ban (even if the Commons now votes for an even more extreme version of the Bill), the Government is imposing the will of these class warriors by elective dictatorship.

*The Daily Telegraph editorial for Friday
March 22nd 2002*

changing rural Britain.” Clearly this campaign failed because the Tories were in office and the legislation stood no chance. It’s only when there is a real danger of losing the parliamentary battle that foxhunters threaten direct action and demonstrations.

Racists on the march...

And clearly those involved in such mobilisations are not unafraid to employ racism. For example, “the Shooting Gazette” [the posh magazine for the thoroughbred shooter] stated “Deport all illegal immigrants” {page 75, March 2001 edition} in the very issue in which the front page proclaimed that their “Next Stop” was “London” for the planned Countryside Alliance demo against the proposed ban on fox-hunting. The march was cancelled due to Foot and Mouth. We hope the racists keep their ‘disease’ to themselves and **stay at home** next time.



From Horse & Hound 28 March 2002

However much the leadership of the Countryside Alliance likes to portray themselves as respectable, there is a tension between them and their right wing rural ground troops, such as the terrier men who do a lot of their fighting for them. The ideology of this group of people is formed in isolation from any progressive social ideas and real minority groups, and as a consequence is a bastion of conservative practices and ideas. This can easily spill over into violence that has been widely catalogued by the Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA) and others. Indeed the Crown Prosecution Service only last year [2001] dropped an attempted murder charge that was faced by a hunt supporter after he had driven over Steve Christmas, a hunt saboteur, in Surrey. The HSA press release dated 5th Sept 2001 was entitled “Its Official — Crown Prosecution Service say it is OK to try to kill Hunt saboteurs”, and covered all the pertinent points well.

If the CPS can drop charges like this cos they feel the evidence isn’t clear enough for the jury to convict, one wonders just how much evidence they need. Surely in conflict situations like this the jury should pronounce on this, not some bureaucratic and right wing decision-making institution

It is of no surprise that the right are mobilizing and concentrating on the countryside and it’s everyday conservatism, and lack of understanding of minorities and their very presence. Everyday language in their publications is often composed of barely disguised racism and homophobia [eg Horse and Hound, 18.1.01, page 5, full page propaganda letter to the Prime Minister by Peter Gent] One approach is to cast themselves as being apolitical, but time and again they are proved to be lying. Whether it’s the poll that showed that 83% of the marchers in Edinburgh in December 2001 were Tory supporters a lot of which were from England, or The Field magazine who in 1983 (4th June) advised it’s readership adversely against Labour, “The choice facing field sports followers next Thursday is clear”. Another approach is to talk up the supposed favouritism that Labour is meant to show towards other minorities, and compare it with the ‘countryside foxhunters down trodden hard luck’.

Countryside Alliance – a Paper Fox?

The Countryside Alliance (C.A.) has been built up on the conservative infrastructure of hunting and it has to be taken seriously, not least for its ability to mobilize people. At the very start [see chapter 5] in 1997 they were able to quickly mobilize over 50,000 and a quarter of a million turned out in March 1998. Indeed they appear capable of fielding 250,000 people at these special

one off events, so let's look at its smaller manifestations.... it has turned out several thousands of people in different regional centres to forward the cause for hunting, Brum, Norwich, Newcastle, Bournemouth, but it's clear they are at the peak of their mobilizing capability because they have no other base of support beyond that which they can tap into already if the campaign is confined to Bloodsports.

However, they do appear to have a number of very dedicated activists who do a lot of the running, and will go to several of their regional events. The only march in 2001 they did after the advertised mass one in March was cancelled due to Foot and Mouth was in Edinburgh on 16th December. This was to oppose the legislation then going through the Scottish parliament to ban hunting with dogs. It is, of course, banned now but we are yet to see how hunting will cope with this. Apart from threatened legal action they have also found out that they could chase foxes towards guns who will shoot them, apparently legally. With only 3% of C.A. membership living in Scotland, leaked internal memos said they were hoping to bring 200,000 English hunters to Scotland. An independent Mori counting team put the total number of marchers at 11,000 with 30% coming from England, and the poll further found that 83% of the hunt supporters vote Conservative. Hardly surprising when one of the best recruiting grounds for the C.A. is not the leafy shires but is in fact Kensington & Chelsea, Michael Portillos' very safe Tory seat.

The Countryside Alliance then is based on hunting with farming interests coming second. "Agriculture may be described with some justification as the 'Conservative Party at work' and for generations, the party's grandees have come mainly from the farming and land-owning classes, and even those who are businessmen or professionals tend to take up agriculture as hobby-farmers. Some authors have said that as many as 70% of Conservative MP's have commercial links with the food and farming industry. [4] More worrying perhaps is the 'fortuitous' political developments that have enabled some respect and political development for the Countryside Alliance from sections of the media and middle class.

Foot and Mouth and the Petrol dispute allowed a conservative persecution complex to develop which showed why careful analysis of the emerging direct action right wing movement is necessary, as they are able to mobilize fairly easily across issues from a right wing perspective.

March 27th 2002 – Alliance warns of 'Summer of Discontent' with Chief Executive Richard Burge warning "that DEFRA ministers and prejudiced

MPs would be subject to consistent law-abiding protests at official engagements, as part of a sustained campaign by rural people which was now highly likely to include a reinstated massive London march"

The Political Situation today

The welcome decision by the Scottish Parliament on February 13th 2002 to ban hunting with dogs does not, by any means, guarantee that the British Parliament will follow suit. [See introduction to this pamphlet] Blair may be under pressure from a large number of back-bench MP's to ban fox-hunting but he is certainly not under pressure from the electorate at large and where there is pressure it is from those fighting to keep it. Blair's success, or otherwise, at the next election will not depend on what he does about foxhunting.

As such, the prospects for a victorious struggle against hunting are weakened partly because of the ethos of certain groups who have their own agendas. **The failure in particular to gather together a significant political force in terms of numbers on its actions has held the anti-hunt movement back already for decades and is in danger of losing this battle as well.** The respectable and indeed Royal organizations (RSPCA) did come together to form Deadline 2000, and when they failed to get hunting banned by the year 2000 have finally changed their name to "Countdown to a ban" in early 2002. Perhaps they should have questioned whether their approach had failed to help the campaign to stop hunting with hounds already?

Other groups like the Hunt Saboteurs association are just interested in sabbing, although individuals and groups have taken it further, the League Against Cruel Sports is busy being respectable and virtually only campaigning in Parliament and the media. The National Anti-Hunt campaign is also very busy and has organized a variety of things on shooting as well as foxhunting. Peta and societies like the Vegetarian are either just interested in their own agendas or isolated campaigns. This is unlike the Countryside Alliance whose individual campaign groups quickly subsumed their identity for the 'greater good', although it is clear that hunting is the sole raison d'être of the Countryside Alliance as indicated elsewhere in this booklet.

Perhaps the animal rights' movements think too much about themselves, when an umbrella group to mobilize the hundreds of thousands of potential supporters is the one way that real pressure could be put to bear to hasten the demise of hunting and make sure no Government dares to allow its re-introduction..

It is worth remembering that it is said that the French Revolution was carried

out by poachers, who in those days were the poor and the starving, and they disposed of both land and the right to shoot game enjoyed by the rich. In Britain today the urban masses are again denied land rights, the money to go hunting, and perhaps with the availability of food the issue is of equality of aspirations against the demanded arrogance to go hunting with no social obligations. Where once the aristocracy were afraid of republican poachers, they are now afraid of vegetarian hunt saboteurs. The 'Right to Roam' will haunt the aristocracy for generations....The real test for the anti hunting movement lies in it's ability to work together on a large level, and **also in being able to raise the land question as a political issue**. Not an easy task, though it has been seriously important less than 100 years ago when even the Prime Minister was advocating land reform. The Liberal Prime Minister in 1906 said "We wish to make the land less of a playground for the rich, and more of a treasure house for the nation." Fine words, yet to be realized... There has always been opposition to foxhunting as the foreword to the book "*Let's Go hunting*" (1950) reveals:

"There is little doubt that the title of this book will set the critics of hunting in full cry" — Duke of Beaufort

Not that we should be surprised as the second ever edition of *Horse and Hound* also reported a large anti-hunting community.

The Long March to Freedom

Perhaps in Britain the **Captain Swing campaign of 1830** is the example we are looking towards of the poacher's revenge. Incidents like the following caused widespread and disciplined direct action that was put down brutally. "In mid-May 1830, an inquest was held on four farm labourers, found dead, huddled under a hedge near Ealing. The surgeon who conducted the post mortem reported that he had found nothing in their stomachs but sorrel, and death was caused by starvation. In the House of Lords Lord Winchilsea... told his fellow peers that such cases were not exceptional". Hopkins, P. 185.

The Norfolk hunt took the prisoners to jail after a battle around Melton Hall. This didn't change the battleground though, and in the 1870's Game law convictions were over 10,000, running at twice the rate of 30 years previous.

The struggle against hunting has ebbed and flowed depending upon the political situation and cultural fashions; if we allow the press or some of the more respectable to direct the campaign away from the masses then we only have ourselves to blame. Though the animal rights movement is fractured along

the lines of who does direct action and who does not, these are political hurdles we must overcome.

[1] "Scandal of poor health and safety in the countryside must be addressed" [3.11.00. Press release by the Transport and General Workers Union]

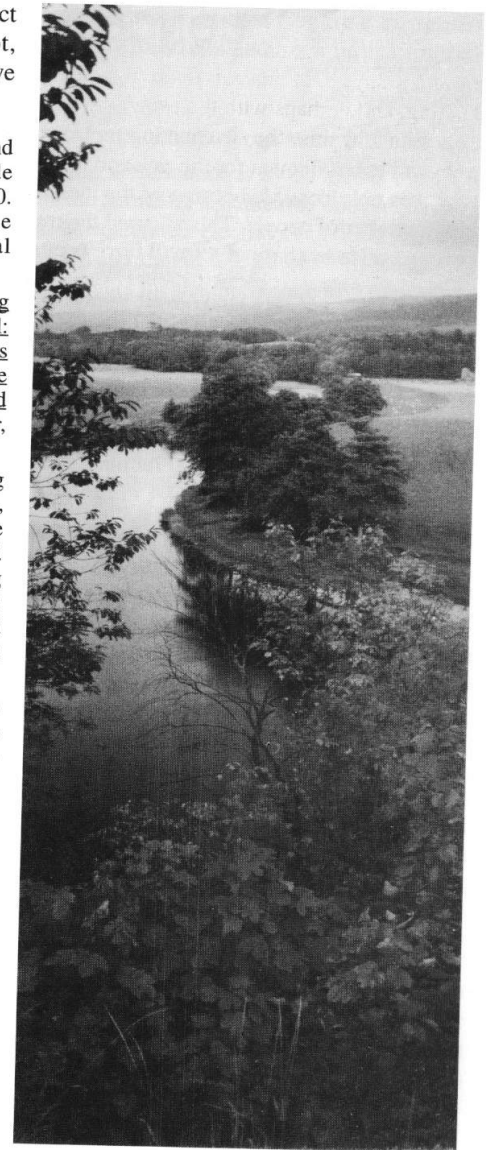
[2] See "Hunters 'breeding foxes' to provide for the kill: concrete chambers used as 'artificial earths' to ensure supply of animals for blood sport", Paul Harris, Observer, 17.2.02.

[3] P. Milbourne. "Challenging the Rural: Representation, Power and Identity in the British Countryside". In P. Milbourne (Ed.) "Revealing Rural 'Others': Representation, Power and Identity in the British Countryside". Pinter. 1997.

[4] {R. Lacey, "Poison on a Plate: The Dangers in the Food we eat – and How to Avoid them", London: Metro, 1998}

"Give us our land back!"

Photo: Steve Green



CONCLUSION

Less than 200 years ago foxhunting replaced the hunting of deer as a major source of entertainment for the rich and landed gentry. Foxhunting then, and now, was only possible because of the massive amounts of land owned by a small number of people. This allowed them to roam over hundreds of miles of countryside in chase of a small furry creature.

How did they get this land? Well pretty simple, they stole it in a process started by William the Conqueror, continued by Henry the eighth and cemented by the various 'Acts of Enclosure' which removed the peasantry from their land[s] and forced them in to the factories, abroad or in to an early grave.

These actions have left land ownership in Britain in the hands of very few people such that today 189,000 families control over 40 million acres whilst the other 59 million live on 4.4 million acres. Dense overcrowded cities, sky-high rents and rocketing house prices are just some of the consequences.

The current bunch of large landowners, which includes the Royal Family, are the descendants of the violent bands of thieves and criminals who stole the land in the first place. Why they should, all these years later, be allowed to hang-on to their ill-gotten gains is a question they have to tried to prevent being raised – first, by burying the only 'official' report into how much they own, then, by running the House of Commons through their dominance of the Conservative Party, and also running the House of Lords because; well because they are the Lords! They more or less owned the place till 1999. But not anymore.

Arrogance

Foxhunting for such people has represented the right to do what they want on land their ancestors stole, although they're also prepared to do it on land they don't own and don't have permission to use, such is their arrogance. They want to maintain such 'rights' and hope that by forming and organising themselves in 'The Countryside Alliance' they can defend their privileges. Of course, they're astute enough to know that their cause is not very popular and so they have sought to hide themselves and their real intentions by moderating their language and even pretending to take up some genuine concerns of the

people living in rural areas. They have even suggested they are a 'persecuted minority'. As this pamphlet graphically illustrates nothing is further from the truth.

The struggle continues

The struggle to finish off foxhunting with hounds is by no means over. The victory of campaigners in getting the Scottish Parliament to outlaw this cruel and unnecessary activity should be celebrated gleefully, but news that 'The Countryside Alliance' intend to try and mount a legal challenge using the European Convention of Human Rights means the issue could drag on for some time. Remember that Laws to ban badger-hunting were first passed in 1973, but it took 3 further laws and eighteen years before badgers were fully protected.

Here's hoping we're not waiting until 2020 before foxhunting with hounds is finally banned. Court actions do, however, take a long time. There is also the question of the attitude of the Police to consider. Will they be prepared to act if the local gentry, major landowners or their supporters defy or break the law? Hunt saboteurs have continuously complained about the partiality of the police, harassing them, arresting them for minor offences whilst ignoring serious assaults, intimidation and harassment by those engaging in foxhunting. It will be interesting to see how vigorously future activities by foxhunters are policed.

Will England and Wales follow?

All this aside, three cheers to the Scottish Parliament for banning hunting with dogs on February 13th 2002. MP's at the British Parliament are keen to follow their Scottish counterparts and in an 'indicative vote' they showed that on this issue, at least, they are in touch with the masses of people by voting to ban foxhunting with hounds. However, Tony Blair, appears to want to compromise and allow foxhunting in England and Wales to continue under a series of new, mainly self-regulatory, rules.

Blair would prefer to prevent 'The Countryside Alliance' from rallying its 'troops' as they have shown they are capable of mobilising at least a few hundred thousand on special occasions and who are predicting they will turn out half a million people at a Summer 2002 march. Blair does not wish to antagonise some of the largest landowners in Britain.

What to do

If the 'Countryside Alliance' are mobilising to defend their power and privileges then what are those opposed to foxhunting going to do? Clearly the continued lobbying of MPs is important, but how many Labour MPs are prepared to defy and/or leave the Labour Party if Blair reneges on another manifesto commitment? Not many I would bet.

You could support, join and get active in your local hunt saboteurs group. By turning out to oppose the foxhunters you can show them that you disapprove of their actions. Foxhunters have been suggesting that very few people turn out to oppose them.

You can also organise a meeting in your area - invite a speaker from the contact list at the back or contact RPM for a speaker [07967 886257]

Take additional copies of this pamphlet to sell to your friends and workmates

Get involved, or set-up a campaign to 'reclaim the land'

However, as history has shown it is only possible to effectively challenge the power of the landed gentry, the aristocracy and the landowners when people are mobilised in opposition to them. Smallish groups of people, no matter how well intentioned, will be no match for these admittedly declining but still powerful forces.

This is an appeal to groups involved in Animal Liberation, Hunt Sabbing, Anti-Vivisection and those living and working in the Countryside who are opposed to foxhunting. Combine your activities, invite other organisations from the town and cities to join and get out into the communities and workplaces to build a mass campaign, which will end foxhunting for good and set the people on a course to 'reclaim their land'.

Contact list

Hunt Saboteurs Association,
PO Box 5254,
Northampton NN1 3ZA
0845 4500727
info@huntsabs.org.uk
<http://has.environment.org.uk>

Kill Hunting Campaign
Against all Hunting
C/o Mr Angus Macmillan
Meikle Boturich,
Near Balloch,
Dunbartonshire G83 8LX
01389 756424
savethedeer@aol.com
<http://www.killhunting.org.uk>

Corporate Watch
16b Cherwell Street,
Oxford OX4 1BG
01865 791391
mail@corporatwatch.org
www.corporatwatch.org.uk

Who Owns Scotland,
Andy Wightman,
9 Inverleith Terrace,
Edinburgh EH3 5NS
0131 538 5175
andywightman@caledonia.org.uk
<http://www.whoownsscotland.org.uk>

Who Owns Britain at
<http://www.who-owns-britain.com>

The Land is Ours,
16b Cherwell Street,
Oxford OX4 1BG
01865 432920
office@tlio.demon.co.uk
<http://www.oneworld.org/tlio>

League Against Cruel Sports,
Sparling House,
83/87 Union Street,
London SE1 1SG
020 7 403 6155
info@league.com
www.league.uk.com

The Ramblers Association:
www.ramblers.org.uk

England:

ramblers@london.ramblers.org.uk

Scotland:

enquiries@scotland.ramblers.org.uk

Wales:

cerddwyr@ramblers.org.uk

Thanks to AK Distribution for agreeing to help with sales of this booklet. They have a brilliant range of books and pamphlets, periodicals and audio-visual merchandise. Contact them for a catalogue.

AK Distribution, PO Box 12766,
Edinburgh EH8 9YE
0131 5555165
www.akuk.com
ak@akedin.demon.co.uk

Revolutions Per Minute, BCM Box 3328, London WC1N 3XX

RPM is a radical publishing project that aims to help liberate the working class internationally. This requires a revolution and the replacement of a system based on profit with one based on people's needs. RPM feels it can best contribute towards its aims by producing pamphlets and sponsoring web-sites such as Red-Star-Research [see below], so as to aid discussion, debate and the distribution of ideas and information. Where appropriate RPM will also help other publishers to distribute their works.

Alongside this RPM will aim to produce a range of quality merchandise such as enamel badges of well-known and loved class struggle heroes, t-shirts, poetry and music.

In time it is also hoped that RPM will be able to help fund struggles and aid those who have suffered from taking part in them.

RPM is funded by sales, donations and from supporter's standing orders. If you can help in any way with distribution and sales of any publications or merchandise please make contact.

Recent issues of RPM are as follows: -

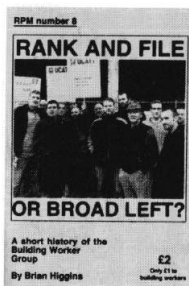
Revolutions Per Minute 8 – 'Rank and File or Broad Left? A short history of the Building Worker Group' by Brian Higgins

Higgins exposes the brutality of the employers, demolishes the arguments that the building industry can't be made safe for those working in it and tears apart the trade union officials and their backers who are unwilling to fight the bosses.

The significant differences between a Rank and File group and the Broad Left [and right] approach are analysed. Whilst you may not always find yourself agreeing with what Higgins has to say, you will nevertheless find yourself immersed in the struggle to improve the wages and conditions of building workers.

This is an inspiring account of self-organisation among building workers. If you read anything on workers struggles read this.

£2 a copy. Bulk copies available

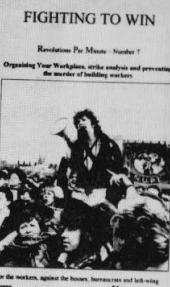


Revolutions Per Minute 7 – 'Fighting to Win'

'Organising your workplace, strike analysis and preventing the murder of building workers'

With strike action at an all time low and trade union membership continuing to decline what can be done to smash the employers attacks on wages and conditions? RPM looks at a small number of strikes so that workers forced to take strike action can develop an understanding of the forces they are facing if they are to wage a successful struggle. This is important, as the industrial climate is worse for workers than it has been in the last 100 years.

RPM 7 also uses two articles from the newspaper of the most successful Rank and File group in Britain, the Building Worker Group' to give some ideas for organising at work.



£1 a copy.

Revolutions Per Minute 6 – 'Against All Odds' – an account of the JJ Fast Food Workers Strike in Tottenham 1995-96' by John McArthur

At one point the JJ Fast Food Workers had almost brought the company to its knees and appeared on the verge of a historic victory. This was, in spite, of the company enjoying the support of the Police and the Immigration Laws. So why didn't they win? This booklet looks at the problems workers have of working within the current Trades Union Congress, and more importantly for the JJ strikers TGWU, structures.

£1.50 a copy or 10 copies at £10 post-free

Future issues of RPM will include:-

Issue 10 – 'The Persistence of religious ideas in the 21st century.'

Due out **September 2002.**

Plus 'The History of Hackney Community Defence Association' – the story of the group that rocked British policing with its defence of hundreds wrongfully imprisoned, the exposure of Stoke Newington police involved in major criminal activity and the work which has led to the situation where thousands now sue the police rather than use the Police Complaints Authority. One of the most important organisations of the 1980's and early 1990's HCDA

is a model of how working class people of all colours can fight back against the police.

Meanwhile a number of other pieces of work are being discussed, written and considered for publishing.

WANTED

If you have a piece of work that you think others would find interesting then get in touch, at any time, as RPM has money available to publish additional written pieces.

This and other issues of RPM are all on the excellent Red Star Research web-site. RPM also produces a regular newsletter, copies available on request.

The Red Star Research web-site has been paid for by RPM subscribers and is the most comprehensive examination of Labour's Links with big business around. It has had millions of 'hits' including, as you will, see a rogues gallery of big business, the secret state, the media, the Labour Party and Tory Party.

www.red-star-research.org.uk

Red Star Research

"The people of this country have to learn to live under Capitalism — they have to learn to accept its risks..."

Tony Blair

Before the 1997 election, the Labour Party pledged to maintain 2 more years of Tory spending cuts. This was largely an attempt to butter up the financiers of the City, but also a bid for the hearts and wallets of the middle class vote. Now we have private companies running schools and Railtrack shareholders getting compensation out of public funds it is plain to see that another reason for the attack on public services is that they just don't fit in with New Labour's business-centric, privatisation-obsessive vision of the future.

Even under John Major's cynical and sleaze-ridden last year in Government, public spending was £4.7 billion. In the 11 months up to March 2001 Gordon Brown had only spent £2.9 billion.

Of course there have been morsels for the masses, a minimum wage, but now Tony Blair boasts that (even after the Fairness at Work legislation) British law is 'the most restrictive on Trade Unions in the Western world'.

The Trade Unions, who used to provide 90% of the Party's income, now provide only 30% — equal to the amount donated by rich individuals and company sponsorships. This proportion of New Labour's funds coming from the very rich has dramatically increased in the last 5 years and continues to do so, as Tony Blair moves to distance himself from any responsibility to the Unions and the Party's traditional core of working class supporters. What was supposed to be the 'Party of the working class' is funded by the rich and packed out with businessmen.

If you take a look down the most recent list of 'high-value' donors to the Labour Party it is full of the bosses of multi-million pound companies like Frank Lowe, Chairman of the Lowe Group (part of an American advertising network worth \$4 billion) or how about Henry Tinsley, Chairman of Tinsley Foods, one of the biggest privately-owned chilled food companies in the UK. Then there's always Peter Coates, owner of Lindley Catering Investments and Sprintinca, who have the catering contracts for most Premiership football grounds, or Dr Chai Patel, Managing Director of Westminster Healthcare plc, Britain's 3rd largest nursing home company.

If you look at the same list you will find that there are plenty of recently ennobled Lords and knights among the donors, including Lord Sainsbury (made Government Minister for Science in 1998) who owns £1.3 billion worth of shares in J. Sainsbury supermarkets. Another famous face is Lord Haskins, Chairman of Northern Foods and Express Dairies, but less well known are Sir Chris Evans, multi-millionaire biotechnology boss and Sir Ronald Cohen, Chairman of Apax Partners & Company, an international private equity company which manages \$7 billion of investment. All of them have given huge amounts of money to the Labour Party (Lord Sainsbury has given £9 million in the last 5 years) and all of them sit on taskforces and working parties advising on Government policy.

When they're short of a story, Journalists have called these people the 'new establishment', but the truth is they're the same bunch of people who have wormed their way into Government circles for years, people like Sir Michael Bishop, Executive Chairman of British Midland, a former Tory supporter who lent planes to John Major's election campaign (then, in 1999, he went to the £350-a-head gala dinner at the Bournemouth Pavilion ballroom during the Labour Party Conference and British Midland were high-value sponsors in the same year), or Tony Gallagher, the owner of AC Gallagher Holdings (one of the largest private development companies in the UK). He pledged £100,000 to the Labour Party in 1999, although his company had

given £114,046 to the Tory Party before the 1997 election. There is also the notorious Robert Bourne, the millionaire property developer and Chairman of Clubhaus, who led the Legacy consortium bidding for the Dome, and was a Tory supporter up until the 1997 election, giving the Tories more than £40,000.

In September 1999 an ICM opinion poll found that 52% of people thought that Tony Blair did not care enough about Labour's traditional working class supporters. Almost the same amount thought Blair paid too much attention to rich people who give Labour large donations. In another poll the month before, only 26% of workers said they believed that management and employees were 'on the same side'. In a country where most people (55% of the population according to another ICM poll) still consider themselves to be working class — despite being constantly told (in the face of our own reality) that class doesn't matter — Tony Blair's 1999 speech to the CBI that he is 'proud to be pro-business' places him very squarely in opposition to those same workers. Stephen Byers told the House of Commons in the same year that he was 'putting the interests of business first'.

As Tony Blair slid across into the driving seat of neo-liberal economics in 1997 many people could see the vultures circling, they didn't believe that "things could only get better". We come out of the Labour Party's 2001 election landslide with the biggest gap between rich and poor for decades, with refugees being used as a campaigning tool and Gordon Brown's adviser Shriti Vadera (former Executive Director at Warburg Dillon Read) telling London transport commissioner Bob Kiley that she 'could not sanction public control of the tube under any circumstances'. The lack of interest in the games of parliamentary musical chairs has breathed new life into street politics, from the Socialist Alliance (with all their faults) to the Anarchists of the anti-Capitalist movements, a trend that in time may bring the first serious Left opposition in the UK since the Poll Tax. For all his rich friends in business and his self-perpetuating middle class political advisers, long-term Labour supporters are leaving the Party in droves.

Although he has got his second term in Government, it's also certain that Tony Blair lost his 'magic touch' long ago — somewhere between Bernie Ecclestone's £1 million and Peter Mandelson's (first) resignation — and his post-1997 confidence has evolved into patrician smugness. The Party who attacked privatisation in Opposition have gone on to privatise prisons, schools, hospitals and even Air Traffic Control. The Labour Party in power has a history of dumping its principles whenever they got in the way, but

New Labour have dumped their entire ideology for a pick 'n' mix set of "values". A cynical electorate disillusioned by the choice of centre-Right Labour or extreme-Right Tory, watched as Blair won the election with the votes of barely 21% of the adult population, in the lowest turnout since 1918. There is a growing feeling on the Left that in the near future the Labour Party will have good reasons to fear the antipathy (not apathy) that kept people away from the polling booths.



Red Star Research

www.red-star-research.org.uk

Red Star Research is an investigative research group that has turned the microscope on Tony Blair's "New" Labour Government. We have uncovered the details of the rich individuals who provide a rapidly increasing proportion of the Labour Party's funding and we have tracked the creation of a vast unelected framework of businessmen who have been brought into the heart of Government.

The site has been praised by visitors as diverse as Red Pepper ("highly recommended"), the Guardian politics website ("superb site") and Class War ("Excellent research") The About Labour website have given us their "Best on the Net" award.

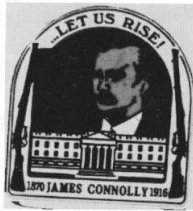
For the last 4 years we have been carrying out extensive research into the nature of New Labour's links with big business and the rich — millionaire donors, corporate sponsors, Task Force members, PFI contractors. We have been following the networks of wealth and power that encircle Tony Blair's Labour Party.

What we've come up with is like a Who's Who? of the New Labour 'Project'. We have the most comprehensive information about Labour's links with business on the Net — including the only complete and up-to-date listings of Labour Party donors and sponsors on-line. We also have the most complete list of Government Special Advisers on the Net.

Our aim is to provide a complete list of all Task Force members (with photos and backgrounds). There are currently more than 1100 business representatives (and only 73 Trade Unionists!) on Labour-appointed Task Forces. The networks of influence are huge, wide-ranging, and constantly changing, and we hope to track all of them on-line.

Red Star Research
 www.red-star-research.org.uk
 contact:
 BCM Box 3328
 London WC1X 3NN
 or e-mail stars@red-star-research.org.uk

BADGES available
 all real hand laid enamel.



James Connolly
 £5



Karl Marx
 £5



The Matchgirls Strike —1889
 £8

Also available in specially designed presentation boxes are:
 'Tolpuddle Martyrs', 'The Peterloo Massacre 1819',
 'Women Workers', 'William Morris' — all at £8 each.

New badges out soon — Zapata and Robin Hood — @ £5 each

ORDER FORM

	<i>No of copies</i>	<i>Cost</i>
'The Rich at Play' @ £4 each
'Rank and File or Broad Left' @ £2 each
'Fighting to Win' @ £1 each
'Against All Odds' @ £1 each
<i>10 or more copies of any of the above at 1/2 price</i>		
Connolly badges @ £5 each
Karl Marx badges @ £5 each
I would also like the following badges at £8 each		
Insert name of badges
.....
<i>No postage charges</i>		
	Total

Return with cheque or postal order (payable to RPM) to:

RPM, Box 3328, London WC1N 3XX

Address to which you would like the above posted to:

Name:

Address:

..... Post Code:

For details of future publications please tick

If you would like to be sent a regular newsletter by email please print your

email address here:

CAN YOU HELP FINANCIALLY?

If you would like to help financially then you could consider taking out a standing order, with all those agreeing to make a donation of £5 a month guaranteed copies of all publications and other materials.

Revolutions Per Minute
BCM Box 3328,
London WC1N 3XX

www.red-star-research.org.uk
revopermin@ukonline.co.uk

Standing order

To[name of your bank]

Address of bank

.....Post Code.....

Please pay Girobank PLC, Bootle, Merseyside G1R 0AA, sorting code 72-00-00. For the credit of the RPM account 47 216 1288

The sum of £.....Amount in words

Commencing on [and thereafter on the first day of every month until you receive further notice from me/us in writing]

Account to be debited [ie current]

Account number.....

Signature[s].....

Address

Date

Return to RPM, BCM Box 3328, London WC1N 3XX

'THE RICH AT PLAY — the history of foxhunting and land ownership in Britain' including 'the politics and people behind The Countryside Alliance'

RPM number 9



Revolutions Per Minute
BCM Box 3328
London WC1N 3XX
07967 886257
revopermin@ukonline.co.uk
www.red-star-research.org.uk

£4