

THE Ecologist

VOLUME 30 NO 2 £3.50

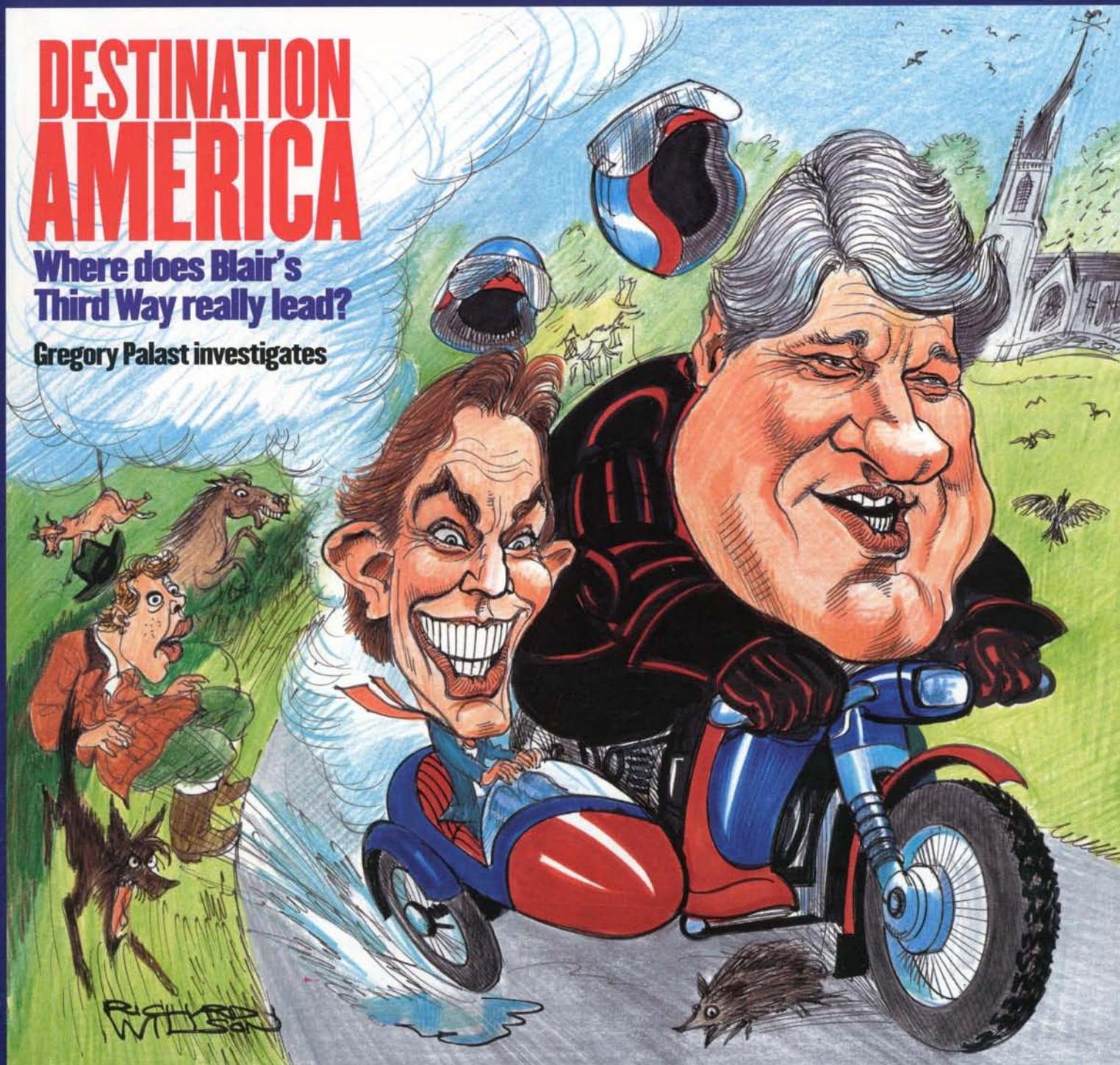
RETHINKING BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

APRIL 2000

DESTINATION AMERICA

Where does Blair's Third Way really lead?

Gregory Palast investigates



ARPAD PUSZTAI:
Blowing the whistle on
compromised science

AFTER SEATTLE:
How the tide continues
to turn against the WTO

FLAN-ARCHY:
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TONY BENN, VANDANA SHIVA, KALLE LASN, BILL EMMOTT...



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BEWARE POLITICIANS BEARING GIFTS

We live in a flash world. A billion pounds lavished on a disposable plastic carbuncle (to borrow an over-used term), and tens of millions spent on cloning, let's face it, a fairly ordinary sheep. But even more flash, or so it seems, was the promise made before the break of the millennium by our trusted leaders that they would cancel the colossal debt owed to them by our southern neighbours. Dolly and the carbuncle... they're not so hard to explain. Big business and egoism more or less sums them up. But the latter... freeing the developing world of previously much sought after debts? Not so easy.

Amid great whoops of excitement, first Bill Clinton, then the UK's Gordon Brown, followed by a host of other public figures, declared support for the Jubilee 2000 agenda. With barely a flicker of outrage – surprising considering the furore that follows comparatively minuscule events such as MP John Prescott's use of a government car to protect his wife's hair-do – the green light was lit. Even the US Congress complied. 'It is this great nation's moral imperative to extend the circle of prosperity and opportunity to those in need,' declared Clinton. According to Bob Geldof, it was Blair's instincts, 'deeply rooted in his background' that led him to the same conclusion. 'I felt we had access to a generation of rock and roll politicians,' Geldof said.

But one thing seems to have slipped through the net. When have western countries ever exercised this 'moral imperative'? Where it concerns the relationship between the West and the rest, there has never been such a thing as a free lunch. Why is it that our leaders were so willing and able, even 'enthusiastic' to describe Gordon Brown's reaction, to embark on so altruistic a gesture? Why was the US Congress willing to sign up? Why was the Adam Smith Institute, notorious for its belief that the interests of capital and those of the masses are identical, happy to offer Jubilee 2000 a sympathetic comment? What is the World Bank doing, allowing spokespeople to praise the efforts of the group? Let's not forget that this institution has more than almost any other been the target of mass protests throughout the developing world on grounds that it has acted as a veritable engine of poverty creation.

One reason may be that debt-cancellation is a campaign that has grown more and more powerful. With international superstars joining forces with well-organised pressure groups, it was clear that the campaign, for which more than 17 million people had registered support, would move boulders – if not mountains. The clever thing to do, as far as our leaders and their business associates were concerned, was not to attempt to blow into the wind, but rather to harness that wind for alternative purposes.

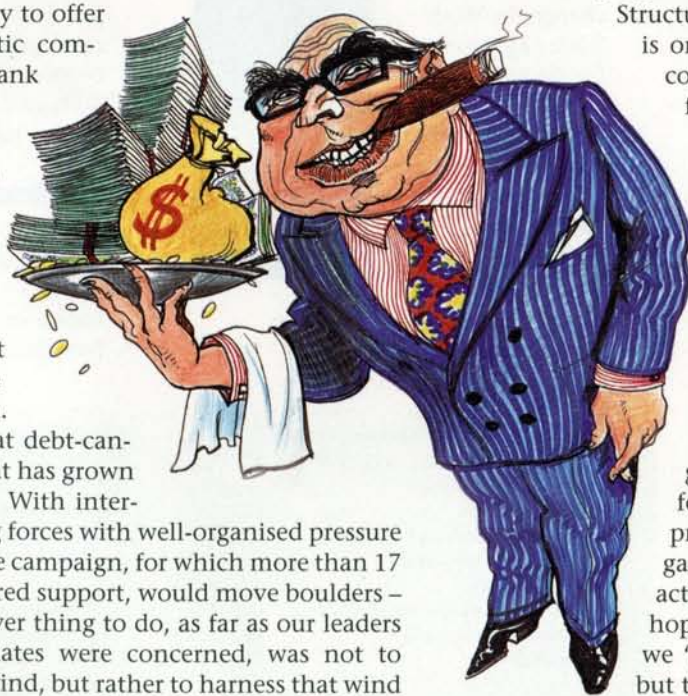
A second reason could be that debts internationally have reached unmanageable levels. Some put the figure at £350 billion. Even on the most unlikely of days, repayment of such debts would never happen. On the contrary, it is not unlikely that those nations 'indebted' to the West might one day band together in defiance of their creditors... and default. Another reason – perhaps more likely – is that the debt relief promised to the poor nations comes with a spaghetti-like tangle of strings, and those strings will likely ensure not only that indebtedness will return, but also that western industrial interests (who have similarly remained uncharacteristically quiet on the issue) will be well catered for. Establishment acceptance of the campaign is not altogether surprising. Nor is how they have almost certainly harnessed the wind. What is surprising is that alarm bells remain silent.

Cynical? Perhaps, but this view is shared by many of the project's supporters. The Adam Smith Institute's spokesman, for instance, is quoted as saying that 'this debt burden is holding back development... cancellation is in our interest as well as theirs'. Gordon Brown, too, is said to have consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office before announcing Britain's position on the issue. The FCO, or at least the department that deals with British exports, has explained that debt-relief is in the interests of UK exporters.

We know that in the small print of both Clinton and Brown's declarations, there are various requirements. Debt forgiveness would be granted only to those who could demonstrate that such a boost would be used 'productively'. 'Both the IMF and the World Bank,' said Brown, 'will show how structural reform... can bring less poverty and more growth.' But let's not forget that it is precisely those Structural Adjustment Programmes, as they are tenderly referred to, that are responsible for bringing about acute debt in the first place. Ghana's Structural Adjustment Programme, for instance, is one of Africa's longest-running, and that country, having been one of the most favoured aid recipients in the developing world, can barely be considered to have 'grown'. Since the creation of these abhorrent structures, and their declared mission to eradicate world hunger, the world has seen an 11-fold increase in world trade and a five-fold increase in economic growth, while more than one-fifth of the world's people have sunk beneath the poverty line. In short: not much to write home about.

Could it be, as John Pilger has suggested, that some of the most poisonous forces to have shaped the latter half of the previous century have carried off a 'propaganda triumph' that will propagate their activities through the current century? Let's hope we are wrong. It is time not only that we 'forgive' the developing world its debts, but that we clear our own debts with them.

ZAC GOLDSMITH



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VOLUME 30 NO 2, APRIL 2000

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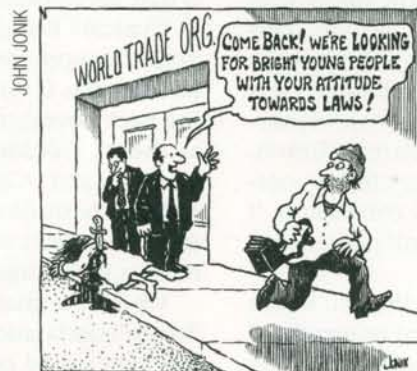
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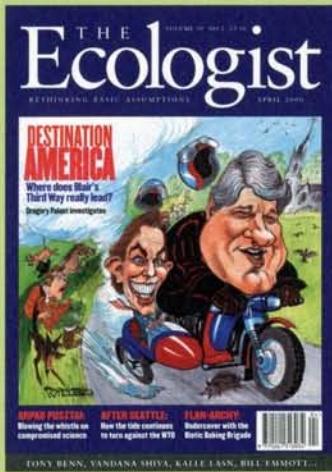
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COVER STORY

We sent award-winning investigative reporter Gregory Palast undercover, to try to root out the true agenda of UK prime minister Tony Blair's New Labour. Working exclusively for *The Ecologist*, he was charged with finding out what makes Blair tick, and what he has planned for Britain. Before long, Palast was knee-deep in exclusives. By the end, he had discovered a bonfire of vanities that not only cast light on Blair's Government, but revealed new truths about US President Bill Clinton too. So what is the Blair Project? Judge for yourself on Page 16.

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Gulliver On The Move

Our correspondent Lemuel Gulliver has departed Automobilia for new lands. Assuming he survives, we anticipate more of the traveller's reports later this summer.

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 Email: ecologist@gn.apc.org – please attach your name and postal address, even when sending by email. The editor reserves the right to shorten or edit correspondence where necessary.

Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics

I thought that you might find the enclosed information interesting.

It is the latest list of obituaries from the UK Atomic Energy Agency (UKAEA) pension scheme – you know, all those scientists working with that highly dangerous radiation all day long year after year.

A quick survey of the ages at which the named individuals passed on is most illuminating. Working in the nuclear industry is a recipe for a long life. Unlike the media and printing, there are almost no fatalities. I would doubt if many of your fellow travellers will live as long as some of the people featured here.

The unfortunate side of your campaigning is that some harm is brought about when Health and Safety effort is diverted away from areas where it could help the public. Fortunately, the BMA, MRC, Cancer Research Campaign and others in the know, ignore your rubbish and concentrate on the important causes, like diet, sunshine and smoking.

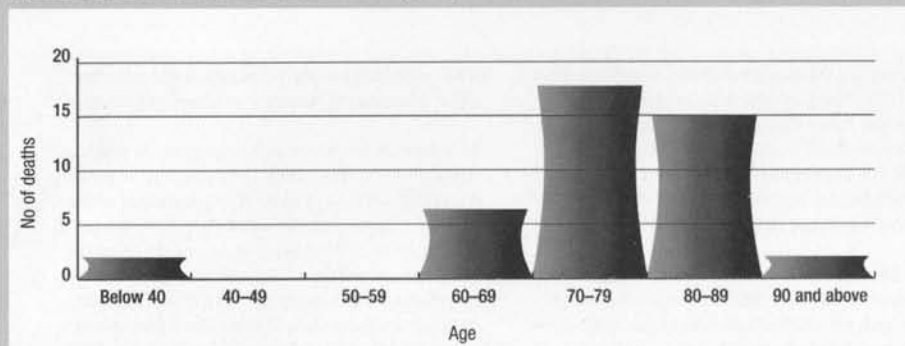
DR SUSAN WHIGHT
 Oxford, UK

Editor's reply: *The letter from Dr Susan Whight attaches an obituary list from the UKAEA pension scheme and draws attention to three people out of a total of 50 who died at ages 98, 91 and 89. From this she concluded that radiation was not bad for them. We asked Chris Busby, Head of the Low Level Radiation Campaign, and adviser to *The Ecologist* on nuclear issues, to comment. 'Unfortunately, this obituary list was something of a hostage to fortune for Dr Whight since she neglected to establish the life expectation in such a group,' he writes. 'According to the Office of National Statistics, the proportion of deaths over age 89 in male workers (age 24+), which made up 86 per cent of her sample, was 0.068. She had two deaths out of 43, which is 0.046. On this basis, nuclear workers are 50 per cent more likely to die before the age of 90 than even members of the general population. For the six deaths aged 85+ the excess was 40 per cent.*

An even higher mortality rate is highlighted by the two deaths aged 31 and 39 in her sample of 43 men. Using the ONS figures, one death in a worker below age 31 has a probability of 0.013. One forty-third is 0.023, so here the risk is almost twice the national average. Poisson analysis of the two deaths under age 40 gives a Relative Risk of 0.62 based upon the England and Wales population, that is 62 per cent higher. Proper comparison with healthy workers from a similar industry not involving radioactive exposure would increase this factor to about 150 per cent.

*This account, like her own, suffers from the small-number problem and thus lack of statistical significance, but at least it is based on analysis and not wishful thinking. For the real answer to mortality in nuclear workers Dr Whight might look at the **Second Analysis of the National Registry of Radiation Workers** by Muirhead et al (*J Radiol Prot* 19, 1-24 1999) and its analysis in *Radioactive Times* 3 (1) 14-16 (1999). There she will find that it is possible to allow for the 'Healthy Worker Effect' using data on mortality by period of employment. It turns out that working for the nuclear industry is no good for your health, with relative risk about twice the expectation, roughly in line with what her obituary list showed, had she bothered to analyse it properly.'*

Ages at death of 43 men from UKAEA obituary list, November 1999



THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Having read some of the November issue of your magazine, (*The Madness of Nuclear Energy*), I think that you have been watching too many *X-Files* and UFO programmes. The idea that all the people in the nuclear industry are part of a conspiracy to subject themselves to damaging levels of radiation is ludicrous.

Throughout the developed world, there are physicists, academics, engineers, health service personnel, trade unions, doctors, research workers, and others, all of whom work with radiation and can see from their predecessors and colleagues that cases of ill health are exceedingly rare.

If you want to reduce risks from radiation, there are three measures that you should publicise:

- * discourage flying Concorde – passengers receive up to 15µSv/h
- * discourage drinking bottled water – it contains uranium decay products
- * discourage excessive insulation of houses – this allows radon to build up.

If the latest issue of the magazine illustrates how you people approach important social issues, it is not surprising that the Green vote is collapsing all over Europe.

MIKE TUCK

Nukem Nuclear, UK

DRIVE IT OFF

If you have a car, you take out insurance just in case the car is stolen, or you are involved in a car accident. As a matter of fact you are not allowed to drive a car unless covered for third party liability. In the case of a nuclear plant, however, there is no commercial insurance available.

If more people knew the true financial facts, there would be a stop to the nuclear industry.

ULLA GRANT
 Birmingham

LUCKY HARM

Statistically, it can be shown that nuclear power has produced far fewer deaths per unit of energy generated than any other source of electricity. It is a very safe technology, regardless of what your journal says about it. The unjustified fear of nuclear power is akin to the superstition

that many people have about unlucky numbers such as 13. Often the builders of hotels or airplanes leave out row 13 or floor 13 in an attempt to pander to popular superstitions. In the same way, many political leaders are afraid to consider nuclear power as an option, merely because of the baseless superstition that is promoted by journals such as yours. Why don't you give a true comparison of the damage to society done by various forms of energy production? All forms of energy production do some damage to people and the environment. Nuclear power production damages the environment and people far less than any other technology for power production.

ROBERT HOLLOWAY

Nevada Technical Associates, Inc, US

Editor's reply: *If you could provide us with the statistics which prove that wind energy and solar power have caused more deaths than nuclear power, we would be delighted to publish them.*

GE GOES EAST

In Europe, GE food is successfully resisted and if consumer trends persist elsewhere, more western countries may follow suit. But as the technology gets harder to sell in the West, the pressure grows for Monsanto et al to impose it ever more aggressively in the rest of the world. In susceptible countries like Thailand where governments are notoriously easier to buy, consumers' movements have poorer resources, farmers are most vulnerable and fallacious arguments about 'feeding hungry populations' have more rhetorical purchase. And herein lies the double-edged sword: farmers in the developing world, who mainly produce crops for export, won't be able to find markets if the rest of the West goes the way of Europe. All the more reason for the GE mafia to sell 'progress' as quickly and effectively as possible.

CINDY DRUKIER

Chiang Mai, Thailand

MEDICAL MONOPOLY?

In the last 10 years, the pharmaceutical industry has enjoyed a higher growth and profit rate than any other industry. And as it grows, so its control over all regions of health-care begins to approach a monopoly. Today, these large pharmaceutical companies are attempting to cover new health care functions by buying up smaller organisations – often those providing natural remedies – and subsuming them into their

mass. Can the day be far away when non-pharmaceutical health care will have become globally illegal?

JAMES JIMAH

Accra, Ghana

Editor's reply: *You raise a valid concern.*

Turn to page 40 where we publish an investigation into the subject.

GREEN IS FOR GONE?

Daniel Mittler's recent article (*Eclipse of the German Greens*, Vol 29, No 8) is rather superficial and ignores the considerable underlying problems.

The fundamental problem faced by green parties once in power is international competition. In today's world where capital and corporations cross borders at will, governments cannot afford to implement any policy likely to court adverse capital market reaction or result in capital/corporate flight. Nor can environmental regulations be contemplated which might make German industry uncompetitive for fear of job loss. The bulk of green (and traditional left-of-centre) policies are thus rendered unworkable in global free market conditions.

The German Green Party therefore finds itself largely hamstrung in its efforts, and doomed to inevitable and eternal compromises; compromises which explain the recent haemorrhage of its support.

Indeed, Schroder himself faces the same dilemma in reconciling left-of-centre aspirations with the need for German business to remain competitive. His support, too, is shaky.

In a global free market, therefore, the only circumstances in which green parties would have any hope of implementing a truly radical, green manifesto would logically be when green parties had come to power in virtually every country in the world; ie when competition between nation states had been eliminated. Until then, the mould is bound to remain essentially intact – until or unless greens and other like-minded movements wake up and start looking for another way.

JOHN BUNZL

London, UK

THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC

I was amazed and revolted to discover that the latest issue of *The Ecologist* was devoted to *The Cosmic Covenant* (Vol 30, No 1), whatever that is. I am sorry to find that I appear to have paid you a year's subscription, because I definitely do not wish to receive further issues if they are going to be of a similar character.

Somebody appears to have gone to an immense amount of trouble to assemble a ragbag of every kind of mumbo-jumbo and superstition; a great waste of time, in my opinion. I was sorry that you did not see fit to include an article about Voodoo, I missed any mention of Tarot readings, and neither did I see any horoscopes. But perhaps you intend to include these in future issues.

PHILIP BOUR

Huntingdon, UK

Editor's reply: *Voodoo? Hmmm.*

Just a Quick Word

WHITE HEAT

Concerning *Cocaine Colonialism*, (Vol 29, No 6) it never ceases to amaze me that our federal government has found a way to justify waging a war against native plants, complete with assault rifles and helicopters.

DANNY TERWEY *Santa Cruz, US*

SHIPPING FORECAST

The preset pathway of people in opposing the WTO is like a group of water-bailers desperately attempting to bail out the water in a boat – water which is coming through a hole that is getting steadily bigger and bigger, and will one day sink the boat in any case.

SHIRLEY-ANNE HARDY *Perthshire, UK*

GEO-METRY

Industry, politics, and public form a triangle around which climate change started and is still taking place at accelerating levels; and none want to concede their privileges. Clearly, a new triangle must be created around a post-industrial/post-economic back-drop model towards an egalitarian non-merchant agricultural lifestyle family-based society.

BULU IMAM, INTACH *Bihar, India*

GM backlash goes global

The amount of land planted with GM crops is expected to fall massively this year. And a new international agreement allows countries to restrict GM imports.

Public mistrust of GM food has given the biotechnology industry a serious kick in the teeth. This year the amount of land planted with GM seeds is expected to fall by as much as 25 per cent, reveals a report by the Worldwatch Institute. In the American mid-west – the ‘rice bowl’ of the States – sales of GM maize are down 75 per cent on last year. ‘The doubts are spreading like wildfire,’ says Gary Goldbery, CEO of the American Corn Growers Association. ‘Farmers don’t know if they are going to have a market next week.’

This year, Monsanto is selling its GM seeds at a discount price, and in a desperate bid to salvage its corporate image, the beleaguered GM giant is changing its name to Pharmacia. Right across the biotechnology sector, share prices have tumbled. And now, new trade laws, agreed by some 130 nations in the international Biosafety Protocol meeting in January, allow countries to exercise

the ‘precautionary principle’ when importing GM products; legislation that the US government and biotech industry has lobbied hard to avoid.

Liability is also a thorny issue. In Britain, the UK’s leading farm insurance company, NFU Mutual, has refused to insure against damage caused to the environment by genetically modified crops. Friends of the Earth has called on the government to ensure that liability rests squarely on the shoulders of the biotechnology industry itself.



Farmers in India have helped discredit the biotech industry's claims that developing countries are desperate for GM crops.

Hail hydrogen

A new discovery could kickstart the ‘Hydrogen Economy.’ Scientists have discovered a ‘metabolic switch’ which makes algae convert water and sunlight into hydrogen.

Hydrogen has been widely touted as the ‘fuel of the future’ because it emits so little pollution. But, until now, producing hydrogen itself has been a costly and energy intensive process. The new discovery, which was announced by Tasios Melis, a biology professor at the University of California, at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science this month, makes hydrogen a truly renewable fuel. ‘It’s the equivalent of striking oil,’ he said.

Within a decade, scientists hope to have perfected the process to such an extent that the algae from a small garden pond would be able to power several small ‘hydro-cars’.

Blair U-turns on pesticide tax

Under pressure from the agrochemical lobby, the British government has dropped plans to tax agricultural pesticide use.

The decision, announced by Tony Blair in a speech to the National Farmers Union in February, has delighted agrochemical lobbyists. The tax, according to the government’s own figures, would have reduced the quantity of pesticides sprayed on Britain’s fields by as much as 20 per cent. But the British Agrochemicals Association (BAA) claimed such taxation would have robbed the industry of £320million a year. Instead, they proposed an alternative scheme, whereby farmers would agree to cut pesticide use voluntarily.

The government embraced the plan with open arms. ‘We are committed to minimising the impact of pesticide use,’ said Tony Blair. ‘And that is why we welcome the recent proposals brought forward by the BAA which provide a basis for making progress with a voluntary partnership.’ But staff at the Pesticides Trust, an NGO which campaigns against pesticide use, are nonetheless dismayed. They point to an experiment with a similar voluntary scheme which was tried in Holland, and which proved ineffective.

US to put ‘guns in space’

THE MILITARISATION OF SPACE IS SET TO GO AHEAD, DESPITE INTERNATIONAL PROMISES.



Will militarised rockets be on the launchpads of tomorrow?

In November last year, the UN placed a serious question before its member nations: Should space be militarised? The answer from 138 nations was a resounding ‘no.’ Space should be ‘kept for peaceful purposes,’ they agreed. But one lone voice begged to differ. For in the US, the militarisation of space is not only considered a good idea, it has already begun.

‘It’s politically sensitive, but it’s going to happen,’ says General Joseph Ashy, former commander-in-chief of the US Space Command. ‘Some people don’t want to hear this, and it sure isn’t in vogue, but – absolutely – we’re going to fight in space. We’re going to fight from space and we’re going to fight into space... We will engage terrestrial targets someday – ships, airplanes, land targets – from space... That’s why the United States has development programmes in directed energy and hit-to-kill mechanisms.’ And it’s not all talk. Last year, the US government signed a multi-million dollar contract for a ‘Space-Based Laser Readiness Demonstrator’.

The US militarisation of space is in direct contravention to the Outer Space Treaty it signed in 1967, which bans the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in space. At the UN Conference on Disarmament last March, China pushed for the strengthening of the treaty’s terms; to ‘negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument banning... any weapons in outer space’.

ALSO SEE REPORT – ‘THE SPACE RACE DISGRACE’ – PAGE 52.

Cyanide poisons Europe's rivers

Europe's worst industrial disaster since Chernobyl raises corporate accountability issues.

The cyanide contamination of Europe's River Tisza has raised the issue of corporate accountability. For the gold mine at the centre of the accident is operated and half-owned by an Australian company, Esmerelda Exploration.

The accident, in which 100,000 cubic metres of cyanide-contaminated water burst from the factory's tailing ponds, has poisoned rivers throughout Romania, Hungary and Yugoslavia. In some places, cyanide contamination reached 700 times 'acceptable' safety levels. Ninety per cent of

the fish and algae life in the Tisza has been killed, and the water to two million homes cut off. The accident has been declared the worst industrial disaster since Chernobyl.

The question is, who is to blame? Romania and Hungary say the mine operators ignored repeated warnings about a possible spill. Esmerelda blames 'freak weather conditions'. Whatever the case, the issue raises the question of how accountable corporations are for the accidents that occur in foreign countries.

The Union Carbide disaster in Bhopal, an accident on a similar scale, set a terrible precedent. At the time, Bhopal was the worst disaster in the history of the chemical industry. On the night of 3 December 1984, a deadly cloud of methyl isocyanate gas escaped the Carbide pesticide plant, killing nearly 8,000 people and injuring a further 300,000. The Indian government sued the corporation for \$3 billion in damages. But Carbide's team of heavyweight lawyers wrestled the settlement down to \$470 million, which shaved just 47 cents from Carbide's share price. Bhopal's victims, meanwhile, received, on average, \$300 – a sum that barely covered their medical expenses.



Ninety per cent of life in Romania's River Tisza has been poisoned

NGOs: more powerful than ever

Non-governmental organisations are exercising an unprecedented influence on the world, reveals a new study.

A new report, published by the Worldwatch Institute, shows that in the last three decades the number of international NGOs has quadrupled. In the US, 70 per cent of the country's two million NGOs have been set up over this period. In Russia, where there were almost none before the fall of communism, there are now at least 65,000. In Kenya, some 240 new NGOs are created every year.

As NGOs have become more prolific, their role on the international stage has changed. Increasingly, governments rely on NGOs to do work that they would for-

merly have done themselves. Today they are regularly sent into battle zones to distribute aid. And the information they provide is often invaluable. Amnesty International, which operates in 162 different countries, has information at its fingertips which isn't available elsewhere. NGOs are also being given jurisdiction over increasing amounts of money. According to the Red Cross, NGOs now distribute more money than the World Bank.

Some are cynical about the increasingly bureaucratic and institutionalised nature of NGOs, but politicians and corporations are already responding to their growing political influence. Seattle showed just how powerful united NGO pressure can be.

ICE CAPS SHRINKING FASTER THAN EVER

The Earth's ice cover is melting faster than at any time in recorded history, reveals a new report. Worldwatch reported in March that global ice melting accelerated rapidly in the 1990s, which was also the warmest decade since records began. The Arctic is losing an area of ice larger than the Netherlands every year, while Antarctica has lost three entire ice shelves in just ten years.

NUCLEAR? NOT MIE

Japan's nuclear power industry suffered a historic defeat this month, when its plans to build two new reactors were scuppered by a local governor. The power station, which was to be erected along Japan's scenic Mie coast line, has been the subject of a bitter 37-year battle between the nuclear industry and local campaigners. Masayasu Kitagawa, the governor, said that safety fears had prompted his decision. 'The plan has neither the support nor the cooperation of local residents,' he explained.

GM INSULIN ALERT

Genetically modified insulin, long the darling of the biotechnology industry, is being linked to adverse health effects. The insulin, which uses e-coli bacteria to create a synthetic 'human' insulin, is taken by thousands of diabetics every day. But medical experts have linked the GM product to potential increased incidence of hypoglycaemic comas, which can be fatal. Many diabetics also claim that the symptoms that would normally warn them of an oncoming attack disappear when they take synthetic insulin. Although producers Danish Novo Nordisk and US giant Eli Lilly deny these allegations, British diabetic specialists say that up to 20 per cent of diabetics could be suffering adverse reactions to the GM insulin.

WHEN IN ROME...

In Italy, Sundays are no longer just a day of rest, they are also car-free, under a new scheme set up by city authorities. In an attempt to cut back on air-pollution levels in busy cities, drivers in Rome's city centre and 150 other Italian cities will be banned from driving on Sundays. In Rome, the ban will last for ten hours, during which time, as encouragement, public transport and entrance into the cities' museums and archaeological sites will be free.

A POT-POURRI OF COMMENT ON ECOLOGICAL ISSUES
from THE WORLD'S PRESS

BANKING ON DISASTER

Kate Hampton, *New Internationalist*, UK

The World Bank is up to no good again, says Kate Hampton. Take the Western Poverty Reduction Project in China. This 'nefarious' plan to resettle 58,000 Chinese farmers on to Tibetan and Mongolian nomadic pastures is certain to upset the delicate social and agricultural balance of the region, and has provoked furious criticism. Yet the World Bank has gone ahead and financed it anyway. Similarly, the Bank is pumping funds into the development of China's coal-fired power stations. In 1998 alone, they lent the industry \$1.35 billion. But helping China to build coal-fired power stations is disastrous for the rest of the world. China already pumps out 13 per cent of the world's carbon emissions. If it 'is not to supersede the US as the world's biggest climate wrecker within the next ten years', China needs to make a concerted effort to move away from coal-fired industrialisation. The potential is there. Today, the wind energy industry in Inner Mongolia alone generates 40,000kw, with room for further growth. Furthermore, with investors queuing up for a piece of the Chinese pie, there is no need for the World Bank to be lending it money as well. As the largest and most influential development institution in the world, the World Bank should be helping less developed nations to build up sustainable energy industries, not profiting from their mistakes.

BIG IS MESSY

William Pfaff,
International Herald Tribune, USA

Globalisation has had its day, says William Pfaff. 'Reasonable people' no longer support the continued spread of a globalised economy. People have lost faith in an economic system that encourages the consolidation of huge industries into the hands of a few corporations. It is like balancing an enormous rock on top of a pinhead. In the case of the food industry, the slightest upset and the rock comes crashing down on us all. Secondly, vastness doesn't necessarily guarantee business efficiency. Take the American defence industry. When the cold war ended, America tidied all its defence-related companies into three huge corporations. Today, all three are in serious trouble, with industry experts blaming 'mega-corporate sprawl' and 'excessive concentration' for the mess. As for the customer, the stifled competition and concentrated production inherent to a globalised economy is hardly consumer-friendly. At the grassroots, people pay more. For the last 20 years, profit margins and corporate greed have kept globalisation well fed, skewing the natural balance between the needs of individuals and institutions. Now the struggle to redress the 'democratic balance of interests' has begun.

STAN AT EASE
by Stan Eales

SURREPTITIOUS FORMS OF POLLUTION...

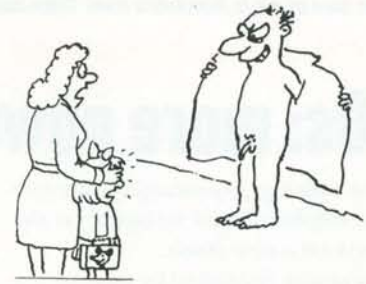
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SE

TITLE: BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

DON'T TOUCH THAT KETTLE

George Monbiot, *The Guardian*, UK

There's a cruel logic to global warming: the people whose lives will be most sorely affected are those who use the least fossil fuel, says George Monbiot. Already East Africa is witnessing droughts every four or five years of the kind they used to see once every forty years, whilst in India, the source of the river Ganges could dry up by 2040. The consequences would be an immigration crisis of unimaginable proportions. Sajeeda Choudhury, Bangladesh's environment minister, says that climate change will leave her country with 20 million refugees. And it will be up to nations

like Britain to bail them out. Global warming has placed us in the extraordinary position in which hitherto harmless actions have become deadly. 'Our moral responsibility is incontestable: every time you turn on your kettle in Birmingham, you are helping to flood Bangladesh'. There is only one way forward: We have to curb our carbon emissions, not by the 10-20 per cent that rich nations envisage, 'but by 90 per cent, within the next ten years. Is any government brave enough to do this?' asks Monbiot. 'Is any government brave enough not to?'

BEAT YOUR GREENS

James Freeman, *USA Today*

It's time to save the Earth from environmentalists, says James Freeman. 'The smartest guy [he] knows' has just written a book. Its called *Hard Green* by Peter Huber, and it 'explains with clear logic what so many of us have felt in our guts'. Namely, that 'burning oil and smashing atoms are good for the environment', that 'encouraging solar power would lead to environmental disaster' and that 'biotechnology is saving the Earth.' Yes, it's true. Because, 'if you want to save the planet, you have to use the efficiencies that come from technology'. Take agriculture. 'Trendy organic farming' is all very well, but without the efficiency that pesticides and genetic engineering provide, we sim-

ply don't have the land to grow enough food. As for energy production, since the average New Yorker consumes 55 watts per square metre of land per day, solar panels, which only produce 22 watts per square metre, just won't cut the mustard. The only answer is oil. 'By digging down into the ground, by using the stored, concentrated solar energy of fossil fuels, we avoid clearing the land.' Of course, nuclear power, which extracts enormous amounts of energy from tiny uranium atoms, 'is the most environmentally friendly resource of all'. Environmentalists should be told where to go. As far as I'm concerned, says Freeman, 'there's no limit to growth in sight'.

GUERRILLAS OF GROZNY

Vladimir Emelyanenko, *Moskovskiye Novosti*, Russia

The war in Chechnya isn't just costing lives, says Vladimir Emelyanenko, it's causing an ecological catastrophe as well. For years, Chechnya's capital Grozny has been used as a storage depot for hazardous chemicals like 24-D; an Agent Orange-type exfoliant used against the Vietcong. Now Russian bombing has ruptured the containers. Barrels of highly concentrated sulphuric acid and tetrachloride are leaking their contents into Chechnya's rivers. The Russian Defence Department has also reported the destruction of 15,000 local petrol factories which

are unleashing a river of kerosene and benzene. According to Defence Department calculations, unless action is taken soon, the region will soon be 'unfit for human habitation'. To make things worse, the mountains surrounding Grozny are home to several nuclear waste dumps. The largest, in the Radion Chemical Factory, lies just five miles from the combat zone. Knowing that Russian forces are unlikely to strike such a hazardous target, the guerilla commando Khatlab, has stationed his troops around the dumps.

FACTS & QUOTES

'Many people... now think of multinationals as more powerful than nation states, and see them as bent on destroying... anything... that stands in the way of their profits. To the well-meaning, honourable folk who generally run multinationals, all this is travesty... Their corporate morality is a great deal better than that of the average government... They are at least as accountable and a good deal more transparent than the average NGO.'

The Economist, UK

'If there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can be easily manipulated for reasons of power. A democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.'

Pope John Paul II

'At this stage no-one has been able to make a positive link between the death of the fish and a clear cause. I'm told there are regular occurrences in winter where fish do die from causes that can involve... ice-caps.'

Phil Evers, manager of the Aural gold mine, Romania, disputing the correlation between the sudden death of 83 tonnes-worth of fish and the cyanide spill from his factory

'The throat-slitting, blood-sucking, meat-eating, fur-loving, vivisection supporting members of *The Ecologist* seem to be stuck in the environmentalism of the 1970s, when the chemical industry was blamed for causing the most environmental damage.'

Measured comment from The Terra Firm, a 'Theoretical Journal for those who put the Earth and Animals First'

'BP Amoco... one-upped its fellow giants to grab the summer award for Greenhouse Greenwash... Even with their planned ten-fold increase in expenditures on renewable energy, those will amount to less than 2 per cent of [their] expenditures on oil.'

Carbusters magazine, Czech Republic, announcing its 'Greenwash Award' winners.

A 38-tonne lorry passing over a piece of road causes as much damage as 100,000 cars...

...one year's worth of the paper used in British newspapers alone would wrap around the equator 270 times.

Both from Dirty Planet: The Friends of the Earth Guide to Pollution by Caroline Clayton

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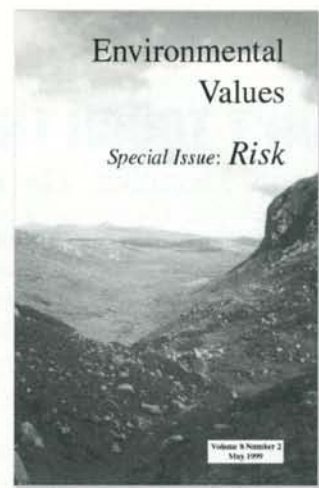


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ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES is concerned with the basis and justification of environmental policy. It aims to bring together contributions from philosophy, law, economics and other disciplines, which relate to the present and future environment of humans and other species; and to clarify the relationship between practical policy issues and more fundamental underlying principles or assumptions.

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Indian markets levered open

A secretive trade agreement has opened India's markets to American imports. The bilateral trade treaty, which came into effect on December 28th last year, was secured through an exchange of letters between Susan Esserman of the US Commerce Department and NN Khanna of the Indian Ministry of Commerce. According to the terms of the deal, America will be allowed to export 714 agreed types of goods to India by April 2000, and a further 715 by April 2001.

In another example of the corporate hijacking of democracy, it was even suggest-

ed to the US not to announce the 'agreement' until the Indian Parliament had gone into recess, so that there could be no democratic debate on the subject.

The sudden flood of American goods, which include foods like basmati rice and tea, will force domestic prices down, destroying farmer's livelihoods across India. The agreement also allows America to sell its carcasses and animal waste parts to India.

Diverse Women for Diversity are calling on India's government to scrap the treaty. To support their campaign, contact: Legal Affairs Division, Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, Diverse Women for Diversity, A-60 Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110 016, India, Tel: +91 11 656 1868. Email: divwomen@del6.vsnl.net.in

Mining sacred Sri Lankan region

US mining giant Freeport McMoran plans to build an enormous opencast phosphate mine in Sri Lanka. The mine, say objectors, would sprawl across one of the country's most sacred regions, pollute the river and lead to the re-location of 12,000 people. They also claim it will employ fewer than 1,000 people and run dry in 30 years.

Money has already exchanged hands

between Sri Lanka's government and Freeport subsidiary IMC Agrico. Local people have formed the 'Fight to Save Eppawala Phosphate' campaign. They are promising to lie down in front of the bulldozers if necessary. Already, protestors claim that they have met with intimidation. The campaign's secretary has had a landmine lobbed through his window, whilst other campaigners receive regular anonymous death threats.

To help the campaign against the Eppawala mine, contact '**Americans for Eppawala**': <http://people.whitman.edu/~waterjs/>

Mexico's bean pirates

An American seed firm has patented the rights to a strain of yellow bean that has been growing in Mexico for millennia. The US-based corporation, POD-NERS is now suing Mexicans who try to export their beans.

Larry Proctor, director of the seed firm, took the popular yellow-coloured beans from Mexican farmers in 1994. Within two years he had managed to cultivate a 'uniform and stable population' of seeds from the beans, which he named 'Enola' beans. Proctor was granted the patent rights in 1999.

The Mexican government is furious, and is determined to fight the US patent office for their beans. 'We will do everything necessary, anything it takes, because the defence of our beans is a matter of national interest', declared José Antonio Mendoza Zazueta, Under-Secretary of Mexican Rural Development.

Mexico may have to spend over \$200,000 on the case; a huge amount for an already impoverished government.

To help the campaign, contact: **Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI)**, 118 E. Main St., Rm. 211, Carrboro, NC 27510, USA. <http://www.rafi.org>

THE CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

WHAT TO BUY AND WHAT TO BOYCOTT...

- **Mobile phones** are a serious waste problem. In affluent nations, discarded phones are forming 'mobile mountains'. But the Australians have a solution: a voluntary recycling scheme. Over 600 retail outlets are to act as recycling points. The phones will be melted down, their harmful gases extracted for commercial re-use and the leftover slag used to make buildings.
- **The Forest Stewardship Council**, which provides internationally recognised eco-labelling for forest prod-

ucts, is to relax its standards. Woodchip products that qualify for the FSC label now only need to contain 30% sustainably-harvested hardwood, instead of the former 70%. 'Certain countries have been finding it very hard to reach our standards', explains Anna Jenkins of the FSC. But for many, the new standards represent a significant climbdown.

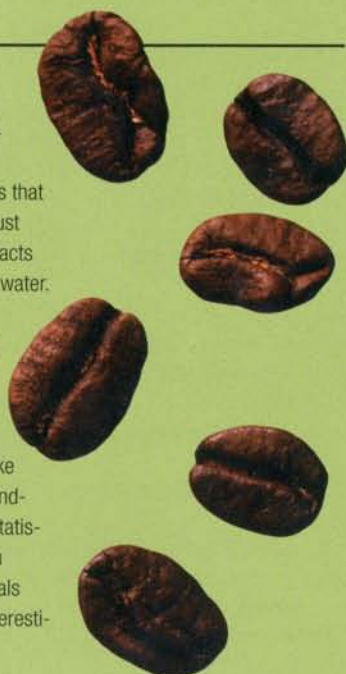
- **Suntan lotion** could give you skin cancer, say Irish scientists. Researchers at Queen's University in Belfast found that an active ingredi-

ent in sunscreens, 2-phenylbenzimidazole-5 (PBZA), which is supposed to protect skin from ultraviolet B rays, damages DNA when exposed to sunlight.

- After much dithering the **British Vegetarianism Society** has decided to ban its 'Vegetarian' stamp from genetically modified food.
- For an ethical vegetable patch, plant seeds from the **Heritage Seed Library**. None of the seeds on the list are grown commercially, so growing Heritage seeds protects rare seed types from

going extinct. Tel: +44 (0)1203 303 517.

- New research reveals that **filter coffee** doesn't just taste better, it also extracts heavy metals from tap water. A study by a team of international scientists found that coffee beans have a remarkable capacity to absorb heavy metals like lead and copper. The findings could mean that statistics on the daily human exposure to heavy metals have been seriously overestimated.



CAMPAIGN DIARY

All Red and Green: Activism Beyond Seattle

25 March, Leicester, UK

Socialist Alliance conference aiming to bring together 'red and green' activists. Speakers from *The Way Ahead* magazine, Leicester Radical Alliance and The Socialist Alliance. £7. Tel: +44 (0)116 244 0956. Email: leicesterradical@hotmail.com

Mobilisation on Globalisation

16-17 April, worldwide

Global campaign being organised to coincide with the IMF meeting in Washington in mid-April. Protest groups will meet in cities worldwide. Email: schnews@brighton.org

Earth Day

22 April, worldwide

4,000 groups in 169 countries promise to 'develop mass crowd events in major world capitals' as a force for tangible change. Tel: 001 206 876 2022. Email: sjanson@earthday.net. Also see <http://www.earthday.net>

Sustrans Cyclethon

22-25 June, across UK

To celebrate the opening of the National Cycle Network—a 5,000 mile web of new cycle routes—Sustrans is organising 'the world's biggest Cyclethon'; a sponsored nationwide cycle ride. Tel: +44 (0)117 929 0888

Low Level Radiation 2000 Conference

14-16 July, Leighton Park, Reading, UK

Two days of lectures and workshops. Speakers from Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the EC Radiation Protection Unit. Tel: +44 (0)1597 824 771. Email: bramhall@llrc.org

International Organics 2000

9-10 May, London, UK

Contact Agra Europe (London) Ltd, 80 Calverley Rd, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2UN, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1892 511 807 Fax: +44 (0)1892 527 758. Email: conferences@agra-europe.com

Petition Against Mercury in Fillings

Ongoing, UK

Patients Against Mercury Amalgams has launched a national petition to end the use of mercury in fillings by 2005. Copies from Flat 9, 6-9 Bridgewater Square, London EC2Y 3AH. Tel/fax: 0171 256 2993

Last ditch for Britain's small farms

Britain's small farms are in a desperate state. High production costs and a flood of cheap imports have devastated all but the largest farms. This year, over 22,000 farm workers deserted the industry. And the recent merger between the UK's two largest dairies, Unigate and Dairy Crest, could pull the plug on the dairy farmer too.

According to official National Farmers' Union statistics, three to four British farmers are now committing suicide every week. Michael Hart, of the Small and Family Farms Alliance, thinks the actual figures are higher. He receives desperate phone calls every day. 'I was talking to a suicidal farmer last night. His wife has taken his shotgun away ... It's a very depressing picture, I'm afraid.'

A group calling itself 'GB Choice' thinks that it has the answer. They have set up a labelling scheme to tell consumers whether their food has been produced by British

farmers. Current labelling laws are misleading: food that is labelled 'British' is often simply packaged or processed in Britain, whilst the actual grain or meat is shipped in from abroad. GB Choice is urging British consumers to pressurise supermarkets to feature the GB Choice label on their products.

Campaigners are also lobbying the government to increase the percentage of organically farmed land. The Sustain Food and Farming Group is calling for 30 per cent of Britain's farming land to be organic or under conversion by 2010. At present only 1 per cent of British agricultural land is organic.

To participate contact: **The Small and Family Farms Alliance**, Lanuah Farm, St Ewe, St Austell, Cornwall, PL26 6ER. Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1726 843 210, Email: michaelhart@btconnect.com www.gbchoice.co.uk. **Sustain**: Tel +44 (0)171 837 1228, Email: organictargetsbill@sustainweb.org

Legal help for activists

Two veteran British protesters are setting up a legal support group for activists. The Activists' Legal Project will advise peaceful protesters whose direct actions find them on the wrong side of the law.

The ALP is being set up by activists Kathryn Tulip, an experienced solicitor who is currently defending GenetiX Snowball against Monsanto, and Andrea Needham, who was acquitted in 1996 after wrecking £1.7m worth of damage to a British fighter plane being exported to Indonesia.

Although an increasing number of people are prepared to take a stand against political and corporate wrongdoing, few have the legal know-how to cope with arrest, they say. Unsuspecting campaigners can be subject to unscrupulous police bullying tactics. And

there are few solicitors who have the time or sympathy to defend protesters.

The ALP will advise campaigners on all the legal aspects of activism, from bail rights to the pros and cons of representation. Through workshops, briefings and a telephone helpline, Tulip and Needham hope to empower protesters in all their dealings with the criminal justice system, as well as helping them to conduct court cases.

'We are not setting ourselves up as free solicitors,' they stress. 'What we can offer is first hand experience of the criminal and civil justice systems.'

Contact: **Activists' Legal Project**, 16b Cherwell Street, Oxford, OX4 1BG, Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1865 243 772, email: activistslegal@gn.apc.org

BP moves in on the Arctic

Greenpeace activists have set up an 'Arctic ice camp' to protest against BP Amoco's Arctic oil drilling. The camp is one mile from the construction site of the petroleum group's Northstar, the first offshore oil project in the Alaskan Arctic.

Every year, a portion of ice the size of Wales melts from the Arctic ice cap. BP Amoco's planned oil rig would speed up the effects of climate change. According to the US Army Corps of Engineers, Northstar is also being built using untested, hazardous technology.

The engineers believe there is a one in four chance of an oil spill from the rig's submerged pipeline. 'BP's customers would be shocked to see what the company is trying to do out here,' says a Greenpeace spokesperson.

To protest against Northstar's construction, log on to the **Greenpeace** website at www.greenpeace.org and type in your protest on the arctic page. Email: stop.northstar@ams.greenpeace.org Tel: +44 (020) 7865 8244

*Source: Standard & Poor's Fund Research. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up and can not be guaranteed. An investor may receive back less than the amount invested. The tax reliefs on ISAs may be altered and their value depends upon an investor's financial circumstances. The ISA Manager will recover tax credits at 10% attracted by UK dividend distributions up to April 2004. The Fund converted from a Unit Trust on 21 September 1998. Standard Life Investments (Mutual Funds) Limited** is a company registered in Scotland (no SC 123322) with its Registered Office at 1 George Street Edinburgh EH2 2LL. Standard Life Savings Limited* is the Manager of the Standard Life ISA. The Standard Life Investments Group includes Standard Life Investments (Mutual Funds) Limited** and Standard Life Trust Management Limited**. Standard Life Investments Limited* acts as Investment Manager for The Standard Life Assurance Company*. We may record and monitor telephone calls to help improve customer service. *Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority †Regulated by IMRO

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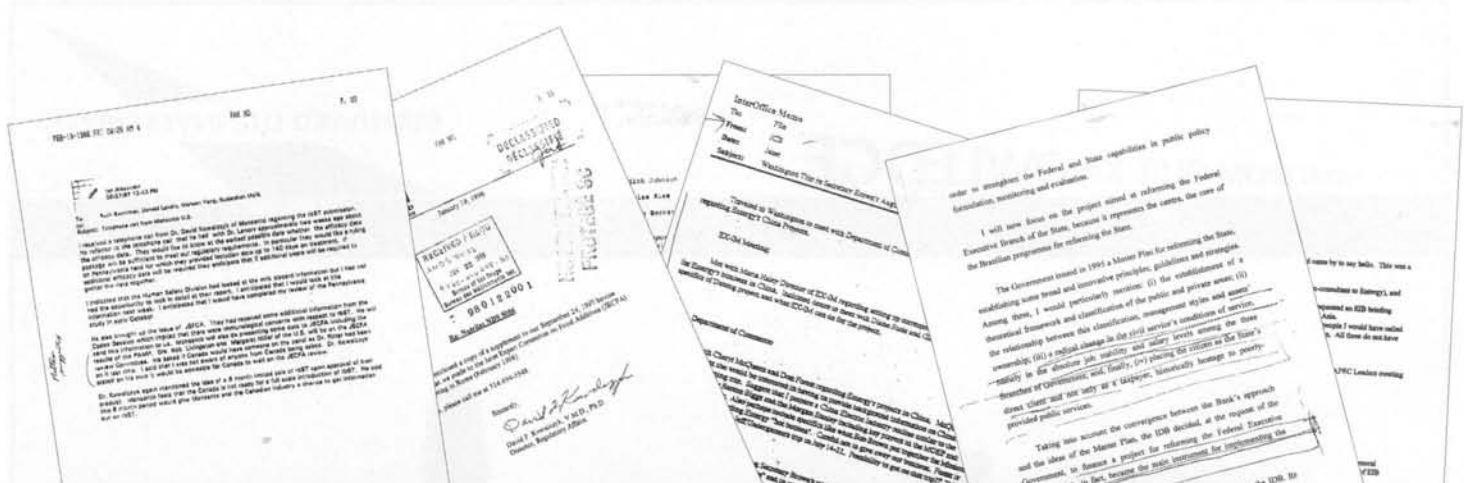
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THE PROJECT

Who *is* Tony Blair? What are his ambitions for his country? Is he anything more than a vote-winning machine? We sent award-winning investigative journalist **Gregory Palast** to ferret out the answers. He found in Blair a principled, even fanatical politician, with a mission to remake his nation.

But at what cost?

Delving further, Palast uncovered secret deals and documents – revealed here for the first time – which expose how far the Blairites, and their mentors in the Clinton Administration, are prepared to go to get their way, and what Blair's Project is really all about.

In his heart, Tony Blair must hate Britain. This prime minister despises a nation lost in *How Green Was My Valley*, weepy over the shutting of filthy coal pits; fossilized trade unions who chain workers to dead industries rather than build new ones. He cringes at the little bell ringing over the door of the hamlet chemist, so quaint and so maddeningly inefficient; at the grousing farmers with two little pigs, their tiny plots edged with dry stone; and, over his right shoulder, at the rabid blue-hairs who demand he keep the Queen's nose on the coinage. He gazes with an almost erotic envy at Bill Clinton, Chairman of the Board of America Inc. The prime minister dreams of birthing the Entrepreneurial State, but finds himself caretaker of a museum of 19th-century glories made somnolent by the lullaby of easy welfare and low ambitions.

'THE PROJECT'

Blair's burden is that his nation doesn't understand him. The traditional Left sees in the PM a hypocrite; toady to corporate campaign donors, traitor to Labour Party ideals. A Mr Bob Spooner, writing to the stalwart gazette *Left Labour Briefing*, huffs: 'Tony Blair has betrayed everything that the early Socialists believed in!', as if the PM could betray ideals that he never had. Even those who merrily voted New Labour have the uncomfortable suspicion that there is no There in Blair – just an empty suit pulled this way and that by focus-group puppeteers.

Journalists have bought into this myth too. One fool said: 'Blair is a bionic election machine. He is a box of gears with a smile painted on the front. He could drink a glass of water and smile at the same time. The country is being run by people who are professionals at getting elected – they have no philosophy.'

I was that fool, speaking in a ill-considered interview last year. But one man had it right: Peter Mandelson. Days before he was forced out of Blair's government in December 1998, for having concealed a loan from Paymaster General Geoffrey Robinson, Mandelson, Blair's confidant, said: 'New Labour has to be more than a ruthless electoral machine. It has to be a political party of values and ideals.'

Go ahead and laugh. You do so at your own peril. For Blair has a Project. The Project is moral in design, international in scope, disciplined, principled and evangelical. Tony Blair's goal is nothing less than the transformation, the salvation, of his nation's socio-economic soul. Blair has been to the Future, and from its source in Washington has taken the Promethean fire back to Bristol and Bournemouth. Tony Blair may be the most idealistic, visionary leader in the non-Moslem world. That should scare you.

POWERGEN AND 'MINISTER NO'

To truly understand Blairism, it is necessary to follow the detailed pirouettes of day-to-day governing; The Project as it is practiced. So sit down by the cyber-fire and listen to a few exemplary stories – of gas-fuelled power plants, of South American currencies, of fraud in Arkansas. Keep track of names and acronyms – Houston Industries, TABD, Fabrizio – and, always, carefully, follow the money.

We begin in May 1998. While civil servants at the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) busy themselves with an official, publicly-announced, energy review, Blair has quietly handed Geoffrey Robinson, though only Paymaster-General, a minor ministerial post, the real authority over these

policies. Robinson is the PM's Can-Do man, but taking care of PowerGen PLC and its Texas confederates will be a heavy lift even for the multi-millionaire minister and Labour Party sugar daddy.

By 1998, PowerGen, the UK's biggest electricity company, dictated 85 per cent of the prices bid for wholesale electricity in the England-Wales 'Power Pool'. Profits were astronomical. But for PowerGen's chief executive officer, Ed Wallis, mega-profits weren't enough. He wanted to buy out the English regional power firm East Midlands Electricity. Punters considered it out of the question. Even the Conservative government had turned down his last request to take over a regional electricity company.

And Wallis wanted even more. His ambitions were international. To form a global power conglomerate, he proposed to merge PowerGen with Houston Industries, an unloved group of US power pirates just past a brush with bankruptcy. For their part, the Texans were enticed by the invitation to own a piece of the fixed casino that is the UK power market. But that, too, was out of the question: the Tories had killed a nearly identical American buy-out request during their last days in office in 1997, before the Labour landslide – in response to the taunts of Labour in Opposition. PowerGen's dual merger scheme – to swallow up both East Midlands Electricity and Houston Industries – looked dead on arrival.

For Geoff Robinson to resurrect this dual-merger deal from the land of the dead, he would have to overcome two formidable obstacles: British law and Margaret Beckett. The law was clear: only the trade and industry secretary, Mrs Beckett, could review and authorise corporate mergers of this kind – not even the prime minister could interfere. Beckett was an Old Labour warhorse, and she was damned if she was going to go easier on the electricity mega-corporations than her Tory predecessor. She had already turned down one US power company merger. In Downing Street, they called her 'Minister No'.

But the 'Beckett problem' was easily solved. PowerGen's government lobbyist (Peter Mandelson's former aide) was told that Blair had cut Beckett 'out of the loop', and that she would soon be sent to pasture in a post far away from the delicate levers of competition policy. The only problem remaining to Robinson was to work the PowerGen requests in a way which would satisfy the wishes and desires of the man with the ultimate authority over Britain's energy system: US President Bill Clinton.

A CALL FROM WASHINGTON

According to internal US Embassy files, the Clinton administration communicated three back-channel orders to Blair regarding Britain's electricity system: keep a lid on Labour's proposed 'windfall profit' tax on the US companies that already owned half the UK electricity system; get this Mrs Beckett out of the way of several American merger targets; and let US power companies build gas-fuelled power plants in the UK.

This last demand was the most trouble. Gas power plants wiped out jobs in British coal mines, workplace of some of the Labour party's most stalwart supporters. In the heat of the 1997 election campaign, Labour had immoderately promised to save the mines. To keep this promise, Margaret Beckett had slapped a moratorium on the building of new gas plants.

Clinton did his best to move her. His top man, commerce secretary Bill Daley, phoned Beckett at the DTI to explain the US government's shopping list. He got no satisfaction. The Americans were getting testy. Even the US Embassy got into the



RICHARD WILLSON

THE CLINTON SUB-PLOT

EXCLUSIVELY REVEALED HERE: THE DEAL WITH THE REPUBLICANS THAT KEPT CLINTON IN THE WHITE HOUSE

The Clinton Administration muscled Blair over power plants, taxes and corporate mergers. Clinton made Blair jump... but who made Clinton jump on Blair?

The answer is to be found in Little Rock, Arkansas. In just a few short years, Entergy International, of Little Rock, swelled from a minuscule unit of a nearly-bankrupt regional electricity company to a four-continent behemoth whose assets included London Electricity. Entergy's rise matched that of Little Rock's first family, the Clintons. Several times Entergy fluttered into the Clintons' life as Guardian Angel in moments of crisis – first when the rising political star lived on his wife's income with the Rose Law Firm, Entergy's counsel.

In 1994, Webster Hubbell resigned from President Clinton's sub-cabinet, confessing to falsifying his bills years earlier at the Rose Law Firm. It would be difficult for a senior partner at a law firm like Hubbell to concoct time logs unless their junior partner's records were falsified to match. But Hubbell would not testify against his partner, Hillary Clinton. On his way to prison, Hubbell suddenly received a \$100,000 fee from a group of Indonesian investors

That's what the papers said, anyway. Little known then was that the payment was from a partnership between the Indonesians and Entergy International, formed to build power plants in China.

Commerce Department phone logs indicate that the Assistant Secretary of Commerce had several phone conversations with Entergy, and meetings with the US Export-Import Bank official deciding whether to fund Entergy deals in Asia. If the contacts related to Entergy business, that would violate the law. Commerce Department officials marked these get-togethers as 'social.'

There were several other 'social' meetings. In 1994, Entergy's partner, billionaire James Riady, had half a dozen chats with Clinton and the same Assistant Commerce Secretary in the Oval Office. Democratic Party fundraising just happened to come up in conversation. Over a million dollars then flowed from the Indonesian groups to Clinton's re-election campaign. Following this generous socialising, the Commerce Department agreed to fund the Entergy China project.

But China made too many demands. Entergy, and the Clinton Administration on its behalf, seeking easier pickings, turned their attention to a more amenable government: the United Kingdom.

Seeking political contributions while on government property, taking contributions from foreigners, aiding a former employer (or wife's former employer) – especially in return for payments to a potential witness, Hubbell, in a criminal investigation – are crucial elements toward proving 'high crimes and misdemeanours,' for which the penalty is impeachment. Why did the Republicans walk away from this material, waiting not far below the surface, when they could have used it to run Bill Clinton from office?

The answer is Triad. Triad is the name of a front company used by the Koch Brothers, ultra-right billionaires, to funnel several million dollars into key Congressional races in the very last days of the 1996 election. The money paid for TV ads smearing Democrats and bought the Republicans' razor-thin 11-seat victory in the battle for control of the House of Representatives. If Triad's and its affiliates' spending were tied back to the Koch's coordinating with the Republicans, the payments would have been declared illegal.

In 1997, a bi-partisan Senate Investigations Committee unearthed evidence against both parties. Then, as now, Republicans controlled Congress and Democrats the White House. And therein lay the makings of a deal. According to a top-level Congressional investigator, speaking on condition of anonymity, three Republican senators made an offer the Democrats could not refuse: a truce – 'you don't do Triad and we don't do Clinton.'

On 31 December, the Investigations Committee abruptly shut itself down. The impeachment continued, but the deal limited Republicans to an embarrassing sideshow over Monica's Lewinsky's cigar.

act, slipping strained communiqués under Beckett's door as a crucial 4 June 1998 Cabinet meeting approached.

For Geoffrey Robinson, however, crisis was opportunity. He had a scheme that could take care of PowerGen's needs and Bill Clinton's with one stroke. If the government could arrange for the Trade and Industry Secretary to reverse policy and bless the PowerGen/East Midlands merger and, at the same time, PowerGen were to commit to a big contract for British coal, despite its premium price, the DTI could then grant US companies waivers from the moratorium on building new gas plants without causing the loss of those last beastly jobs in the coal pits.

Secretly, near the beginning of June, Robinson met with PowerGen's Ed Wallis. On 27 July, Margaret Beckett was removed from the DTI. On 22 September, her replacement, Peter Mandelson, agreed to PowerGen's takeover of East Midlands Electricity. The next day, PowerGen signed contracts for 25 million tons of British coal. The government granted a series of waivers to US power companies, then removed the moratorium on gas plants altogether.

WOLVES IN WOLVES' CLOTHING

What may appear to the ethically rigid as a creepy little fix, a deal on the very edge of the law, is, to the New Men of New Labour, a series of sword thrusts at the knots of government gone sclerotic with legalisms. That is why the real work of governance requires movers and shakers of business, the Geoffrey Robinsons, to move and shake the system, and to get the damned thing done.

But let's not reserve all the kudos for Mr Robinson. For according to the US commerce secretary's confidential briefing notes, it was Tony Blair himself who stepped over his minister, Beckett, to 'intervene to water down the gas moratorium.'

What on earth would move the prime minister of Britain to hop like a bunny to Bill Clinton's bidding – to let America swallow his own nation's power industry, then lighten the US investors' tax load, to grant special waivers to Texan corporations which ultimately, contracts or not, will seal Britain's coal mines?

For the answer, we must step back for a wider view. While US power companies were first on Blair's gift list, other adventuring Americans were also wiping their feet on the golden doormat at 10 Downing Street. The international head of Wal-Mart, the retail behemoth of Arkansas, swallowed British supermarket chain Asda following an unprecedented private meeting with the PM himself. Blair has waved in US prison company Wackenhut, private health corporation Columbia, bribe-tainted lottery firm Gtech, televangelist Pat Robertson and his Internet bank, and, of course, Monsanto, to test its strange harvest in English fields. Not one, but a stable of Trojan Horses that Blair sees as a thrusting stud pool to breed with the mangy local stock.

Just who are these characters washing ashore? Take Wackenhut. Blair's home secretary Jack Straw, the most perfected of the creatures in Dr. Caligari's Cabinet, granted Wackenhut several contracts to run private prisons and detention centres in Britain for children and asylum seekers – just after an announcement of the criminal indictment of 30 of its employees and executives in Texas for sexual and other offences. Previously unseen evidence indicates that Straw's office deliberately tinkered with the bidding process to give this troubled US company the contract over a lower-cost offer from Straw's own Prison Service.

Don't look for the pay-off; this fix was a matter of principle. The home secretary seethes with his master's revulsions, and could not possibly turn back a prison to government bureaucrats and unions.

For Blair is a transoceanic Candide: the US embodies the best of all possible economies. If in the process, American wolves roam the

English countryside and a few little old grannies go missing, if the Wal-Mart dragon torches the rural high street, that too serves the purposes of his economic Darwinism.

THE ANTI-INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

'With a flexible labour force, you too can replicate America's prosperity!' US treasury secretary Larry Summers lectured his London School of Economics audience in December last year, while the prime minister bit his lip with jealousy.

There was something false in Summers' tune. If you measure prosperity by the number of billionaires spewed up by the stock market, then America can't be beat. However, by that un-modern measure annual earnings, the American worker is beaten: real production wages have fallen by 3 per cent over a decade and a half, even though national productivity rose by 14 per cent. The new wealth – all \$8.7 trillion created by the production surge – has shifted to the top 20 per cent of the population: the asset owners. That is the fuel powering the stock market's rise.

This is not a bubble, but a plan. In the 19th century, Enclosure drove England's starving rural poor into Dark Satanic Mills, while the stock market boomed. But it was this cruelty which laid the foundation for a century of British economic and political supremacy. The great disproportioning of national wealth – what Marx derided as 'surplus value' – was the necessary multiplication of what today's economists call 'formation capital'.

And here we go again. Robert Reich, The Project's sound-bite philosopher, set out the basis of the Blair-Clinton programme in his book *The Work of Nations*. The new world, Reich tells us, will belong to 'symbolic analysts' and 'information manipulators'; in other words idea manufacturers.

The dirty business of actually making things will be left to declining nations of 'routine producers'. This may sound like a load of hot gas, but it moves the people who think for Clinton and Blair. The populace must be yanked from today's no-longer-Satanic mills and factories into risky, shifting new cyber-crafts, most not yet even conceived. Union work categories, job security, industry-tied pensions and all the other amenities of inflexibility must be swept away to prepare for the New Economy.



THE PROJECT LISTENS – TO RUPERT MURDOCH

Rumour has it that Blair won't wipe his backside without taking a poll. In fact, though, the Downing Street Policy Unit couldn't care less what the public wants. What they want to know is not what people want but how what Blair wants can be sold to them.

For example, Britain's trade unions were ensnared into endorsing New Labour's alluringly named 'Fairness at Work' proposals, dressed up as they were with an arousing employee-rights preamble. In all reality, Fairness at Work would best be called 'Unions: The Final Solution.'

A brilliant paragraph inverts the entire purpose of Fairness at Work. Unions must win not just a majority of workers' votes in order to be recognised by corporations, but also 40 per cent of an entire 'bargaining unit.' As the employer, not the workers, defines this rubbery 'unit', no union can win such a ballot without employer approval, as in the US. This poisoned clause was worked out between the Government and Rupert Murdoch, says a Murdoch lobbyist (recorded unawares) in return for a curb on his tabloid newspapers' criticism.

Favours and donations don't motivate this back-channel chatter – though, like any experienced geisha, neither Clinton nor Blair give away what they can sell. Ultimately, their faith demands that all proposed laws, rules and budgets are first confessed to businessmen with one question: 'Have we strayed?'

BOOGIE NIGHTS IN BRAZIL

Old Labour cannot help but think of The Project as a coup d'etat by the faction of their party who sneer at singing *The Red Flag* at Blackpool conferences. But this view is small and provincial. Blairismo is in fact the UK subsidiary of an international community encompassing Clinton, Mexico's Zedillo, and a wide group of similar modernisers. Their golden child is Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, whose new Brazil will provide the transforming Miracle for the Third Way religion much as Chile provided the genesis fable for Thatcher's free market cosmology.

However, in the summer of 1998, all this was threatened. Cardoso's re-election to the Brazilian presidency hung by a thread: his ability to maintain the stunningly high value of Brazil's currency, the real. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund dangled a loan

RICHARD WILLSON

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE BLAIR-CLINTON PROJECT

IT DID NOT TAKE LONG FOR CLINTON'S AND BLAIR'S PRINCIPLES TO BECOME, IN PRACTICE, A SERIES OF FIXES

PRINCIPLE 1

De-regulation: Get government out of the way of entrepreneurs.
BUT IN PRACTICE... US government passes confidential documents to Monsanto. Blair government greases PowerGen and East Midlands merger.

PRINCIPLE 2

Privatisation: replace inefficient government with profit-motivated risk-takers.
BUT IN PRACTICE... US demands Brazil's State assets at carboot sale terms. Blair Government manipulates rules to secure deals for US corporations.

PRINCIPLE 3

Flexible Workforce: remove impediments to workers changing to new 'information industries'. Increase capital formation.
BUT IN PRACTICE... Blair introduces 'Fairness at Work' deal with Murdoch to bust unions. World Bank orders Brazil to rewrite constitution.

PRINCIPLE 4

Abstract Symbolic Work: promote 'idea industries' of the future.
BUT IN PRACTICE... Fix the Codex Alimentarius review of Monsanto's BST hormone.

PRINCIPLE 5

International government-business cooperation.
BUT IN PRACTICE... Entergy corporation and Indonesian partners pay Clinton's Democrats and Hillary's legal partners; Clinton muscled UK, Brazil and China for Entergy's benefit.

✎ (ultimately \$41 billion) to prevent the real's collapse, but they would hand over nothing until after the elections.

One humid night that July, Blair's minister-without-portfolio Peter Mandelson samba'd until dawn in Rio with a young man named Fabrizio. So reported Britain's moral watchdogs, the tabloids and the Tory opposition. What the minister did without his portfolio is none of our damn business, but there were other, more important, names on his dance card – Cardoso and the British Chamber of Commerce of Sao Paulo, in particular. For there was something in Brazil more attractive to Mandelson than an expendable boy toy: the Gas Company of Sao Paulo and other state assets, worth one hundred billion dollars which British and American companies believed was rightly theirs, despite Brazilian resistance.

To Brazilians, an Englishman shaking his booty may be a little off-putting, but no scandal. What really caused a ruckus there was Mandelson, a foreigner, endorsing Cardoso's re-election on national television – supposedly a slip of the tongue, but actually brilliantly crafted. For Mandelson's seemingly accidental endorsement was a clear signal to Brazilians that only Cardoso had the safe hands into which Euro-American leaders would place the bail-out cheque.

Three months later, Cardoso squeaked back into office. And three months after that, in January 1999, with Cardoso's re-election secured, the US Treasury gave the nod, a trap door opened, and Brazil's currency plunged through, dropping 40 per cent. Crisis has its uses. To pay its new multi-billion dollar debts, Brazil held a fire sale. British Gas picked up the Sao Paulo Gas company for a song. As Brazil sank, US power companies picked up the Rio and Sao Paulo electricity companies and a pipeline.

LONDON, CAPITAL OF BRAZIL

The only way to test the flexibility of a workforce is to see how far it will bend without snapping back and resisting. On 23 November, just days before Mandelson, now Trade Minister, was scheduled to return to Brasilia for his lambada with Cardoso, World Bank brass flew into London to lay out what it modestly titled its 'Master Plan for Brazil.' At its centre was a checklist of the bank's five measures for a 'flexible public sector workforce': 'Reduce Salary/Benefits; Reduce Pensions; Increase Work Hours; Reduce Job Stability; Reduce Employment.'

The World Bank, and its Latin stepchild, the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) instructed the Britons in the game plan for

implementation, including the bankers' rewrite of Brazil's constitution. Five days later, Mandelson's well-briefed contingent arrived in South America... without Mandelson himself. That week, the UK press broke the story of Mandelson's Saturday Night Fever in Rio from his earlier visit, and it seemed impolitic for him to return at that moment.

BLAIR'S STIGMATA

To place Mandy's Brazilian shenanigans in context, let us move back across the Atlantic to Britain. In December last year, Blair addressed a group of empathetic men of industry, in a speech that was widely reported by the British press. 'I bear the scars on my back!' he whined to his audience. The PM was wounded in combat with civil servants armed with rolls of red tape, stopping these Entrepreneurs from doing the nation's work. Over in the US, Clinton's New Democrats have launched their own war of extermination against safety and environmental controls, but unlike Blair, have too much cool to wave a bloody shirt. Rather, under Vice-President Al Gore's direction, the New Dems are, 'Re-Inventing Government'.

To make sense of all this, we must review the Principles of The Project. The Blair-Clinton nexus believes that 'information' is more than the means for accelerating business; it is the product itself. This leads them, for example, to their fanatical and politically costly defence of Monsanto (and Lord Sainsbury, owner of the genetic modification accelerator patent). Like AstraZeneca and its ilk, Monsanto must be seen not as a technology manufacturer, but an information business like Microsoft or News International. It makes no difference that Monsanto sends information via DNA rather than satellite dish.

Indeed, this new info-agri-industry has a special place in The Future: it will reverse the effect of the Green Revolution, which diminished America as the globe's agricultural colossus. As seed DNA and animal hormone becomes proprietary and its reproduction obliges payment, US dominance is restored. Britain, patent generator, will fly under America's commercial wing, (although Blair's recent acknowledgement of potential GM danger may affect this). But this new industry is doomed unless Blair and Clinton can cut down their nemesis: the Little Man with the Rule Book, the bureaucrat.

Over the past century, horrors from child labour to thalidomide led to increasing limits on free-running commerce. In democracies, these expectations for safe food, environment, health and work express themselves in rules and regulations. Now, they have to go.

THE MEANDERS OF MANDY

PETER MANDELSON'S TIME OUT OF BLAIR'S CABINET WAS A HANDY OPPORTUNITY TO HELP OUT HIS CORPORATE FRIENDS



Peter Mandelson's resignation as trade and industry secretary did not lead to the ignominy of the backbenches but to promotion as roving ambassador to the Project's international friends. The first of his 13 trips from January to September 1999, all paid for by private interests, began with a junket to Paris funded by BP (partner in gas plant enterprises and bidder for Brazil's gas company). Particularly notable was his jaunt to Atlanta for the Progressive Foundation, arm of the Democratic Leadership Conference, the 'directorate' of Clinton's party. In June, there was a hop to Portugal for the Bilderberg Conference, which aims to make parvenue politicians like Mandelson more comfortable with the company of bankers than bus conductors. In May, Mandy traveled to the ultra-right Hudson Institute's Regulatory Institute in Washington, the soapbox of Dr. Irwin Stelzer, who made his fortune representing the power companies that Mandelson so favoured. Mandy returned to the Clinton DLC crowd at the Aspen Institute in August, after having checked in with investment bankers Warburg Dillon Read, the Euroamerica Foundation, IPPR (Milan) and Lord Rothschild (for whom he visited Albania).

PETE HODKINSON

ENTER MONSANTO AND THE TABD

On 22 January 1998, a package arrived for the head of a tiny research division of Canada's health ministry from Protiva, a Monsanto company. It contained three volumes of confidential documents passed to Monsanto's lobbyists from an official in the US Food and Drug Administration, Dr. Nick Weber. The purloined documents contained official doubts about Monsanto's milk hormone, bovine somatotropin (BST) which, despite Monsanto's efforts to conceal it, made test rats ill. The cache from Monsanto could help the company's defenders undermine opponents of BST's approval by the Codex Alimentarius.

If you've never heard of this organisation with the toothsome medieval name, that's deliberate. Until 1996, Codex Alimentarius merely dispensed advice to nations too poor to fund their own food safety bureaucracies. But that year, the World Trade Organisation politically modified Codex, transforming it into a Super-Agency armed with the authority to issue 'Rebuttable Presumptions'. No nation can now deny entry of a product it deems dangerous if it is blessed with the WTO's rebuttable presumption of harmlessness. Rejection brings down a deadly hail of trade sanctions.

This puts the WTO in perspective. Trade is its name, not its mission. If a nation cannot block a product, it cannot block its local manufacture. Get rid of your old Leninist images of imperialism, of the Opium Wars, where British and American guns opened foreign markets to Western products. The WTO reaches beyond busting tariff barriers to smashing down each nation's internal regulatory authority. The aim is nothing less than reversing a century of expanding public scrutiny and control of industry.

The transformation of Codex into a deregulation police force is a big step toward worldwide 'MRA' – Mutual Recognition Agreements. In raw form, MRA means a product or process approved in one nation is approved in all – for medical devices, GMOs, oil spill prevention requirements, and more. MRA is the Holy Grail of the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue.

The *what?*

In 1997, in his private meeting with Britain's Trade Secretary Beckett, US Commerce Secretary Daley instructed the new UK minister, 'TABD is the most influential business group advising governments on U.S.-EU commercial relations. Conclusion of the long-sought MRA shows how influential the TABD can be in moving governments to act on business priorities. Your encouragement,' Daley said, 'would be helpful.' (How much easier it must have been for the American when Beckett was replaced by Mandelson, who required neither tutoring in the ways of the powerful nor embarrassing written communications explaining Clinton-sensitive requests.)

The Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue was conceived by Ron Brown, Clinton's first Commerce Secretary and party chief who died in an air crash in 1994 on a sales trip to Bosnia. TABD is a working group of 100 of the West's most powerful CEOs. Each of TABD's corporate potentates is paired with a top-level government agent in the USA or Europe. Take a look at the TABD's secretive 'Implementation Plan,' dated October 1999, which targets 33 key environmental, consumer and worker protection laws in selected nations to defeat or de-fang.

The USA is not exempt. TABD has determined it must put an end to America's unique right of individual citizens to sue corporate wrongdoers. As always, TABD's case against control of industry is cloaked in the sheep's clothing of Free Trade. Laws compensating vic-

tims of industrial damage, 'represent an impediment to exporters'. TABD would, for example, absolve Exxon from paying the \$5 billion in punitive damages ordered by the courts as punishment for the Exxon Valdez spill.

In May 1998, at a ceremony in Birmingham, Blair and Clinton swore allegiance to the TABD's programme. To the media, the christening of the 'Transatlantic Economic Partnership' was just another anodyne summit press conference, but to business lobbyists in the know, this marked an extraordinary commitment to take apart, brick by subtle brick, any of the structures of government which might impede the new commerce.

BILL, TONY AND CORPORATE AMERICA: IS IT REALLY LOVE?

On 13 November 1998 the New York Times printed a truly curious letter, 'IT'S TIME TO REPAY AMERICA,' by Tony Blair. Britain's PM thanked Bill Clinton and the whole of the United States for introducing him to the simple pleasures of bombing selected dictators and to leadership the American Way. 'Governments should not hinder the logic of the market ... results not theology ... free from preconceptions and bureaucratic wrangling.' It was a wee bit embarrassing, like getting a Valentine dipped in perfume from an office mate. Tony thought it was love; Bill thought it was just a *business* relationship.

Bill Clinton can put on a pair of shades and blow a mean *Heartbreak Hotel* on his sax. He feels our pain – and two women have signed legal affidavits swearing he felt theirs. Bill is a manipulative scamp – and you've got to love him for it. It's only fair: he knows the men of industry who lend him their golf carts will return to their true home, the Republican Party, as soon as the New Dems show they can be beaten. He learned that the hard way in 1994, when business deserted the Business Democrats. In the meantime, he figures they'll be happy to fill the campaign kitty, so long as, at the end of the day, the Sao Paolo gas company falls into their hands.

But Blair is different: he *believes*. He can't help it. He has none of Bill Clinton's cynical cool. Dr. Faustus had the advantage of knowing he sold his soul to the Devil; he could always redeem the pawn ticket. But the Prime Minister, giving over Britain's high streets to Wal-Mart, jails to Wackenhut, fields and supermarket shelves to Monsanto, is convinced he's sold his nation's soul to Santa Claus. The Americans will sprinkle the elf dust of commerce know-how over his laggardly island and – presto! – Enterprise will take flight. How sad to see his affections so abused. Only in the ineluctable electoral defeat will he realise, as they say in Arkansas, he's been kissed, but he ain't been loved. ♦

Special thanks to Antony Barnett (*Observer*), Rob Evans and David Hencke (*Guardian*), Erik Wesselius (*Corporate Europe Observatory*), Robin Ramsey (*Lobster*), Dr James Ciment (*New School for Social Research*) – and others to whom I am grateful, but who cannot be named.

Gregory Palast writes a column for *The Observer*. His commentaries have appeared worldwide, and he has been called 'America's number one expert on government regulation'. His 'Lobbygate' expose in *The Observer* in 1998 exposed the influence of corporate lobbyists within the Blair government, and was named 'Scoop of the Year' by the Industrial Society. He is recipient of the David Thomas Award for Writings on Secrecy and Democracy.



**'Blair is
different: he
believes.
He can't help it.
He has none of
Bill Clinton's
cynical cool.'**

IS 'DEVELOPMENT' GOOD FOR THE THIRD WORLD?

IN THE FIRST OF A REGULAR NEW SERIES, IN WHICH KEY PLAYERS DEBATE THE CRUCIAL ISSUES OF OUR TIME, *ECONOMIST* EDITOR BILL EMMOTT AND INDIAN ENVIRONMENTALIST VANDANA SHIVA LOCK HORNS OVER THE FATE OF THE 'DEVELOPING' WORLD.



Vandana Shiva is Director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, in New Delhi, India, and a prominent environmental activist.

Dear Bill Emmott,

Over the years, magazines like *The Economist* have promoted the idea that financial growth is 'development' and that this 'development' is good for the Third World. However, this sort of growth is not 'development' – it is more often than not destruction of the environment, the livelihoods and the cultures of Third World communities.

What is referred to today as 'development' is actually 'maldevelopment'. It is designed and driven by external forces for the profits and control of external agents and actors. The World Bank generates \$3 of business for western companies for every dollar it lends to the Third World for 'development'. 'Development' allows \$500billion to flow out from the Third World to the rich West in interest and debt payments and low prices for Third World products, while \$50billion goes in the opposite direction as development aid.

'Development' is a trick played on the people of the Third World, especially rural communities, to rob them of their resources and wealth, and leave them dispossessed and in debt. While the people of the Third World are supposed to be 'developed' by this process, they are instead uprooted and displaced. Their resources are snatched from them, converting them into 'development' refugees. Two hundred million people have been forcibly removed from their homes, ecosystems and cultures in the name of development. The tribals in India's Narmada Valley, the indigenous peoples of the Amazon and Papua New Guinea and the coastal communities along India's 7,000km coastline do not view the giant dams, superhighways, mines, ports and industrial aquaculture that uproot them as 'development'. For them, these activities spell disaster, which is why they are resisting.

One of the most ominous commercial developments of the past decade has been the merger of chemical, pharmaceutical, biotechnology and seed companies to create what are called 'Life Sciences' corporations. A more accurate name would be 'Death Sciences', because these are the bodies that produce genetically engineered, herbicide-tolerant seeds which lock farmers into dependence on chemical inputs, destroy biodiversity and render agricul-

ture more vulnerable. For farmers, the shift from open-pollinated plant varieties to hybrids, genetically engineered crops and sterile 'terminator' seeds, is not a symbol of 'development' but of debt, dependency and destitution. For seed corporations, forcing farmers to buy seed every year implies bigger markets and faster growth. But this increase in corporate profits is based on the destruction of nature and her processes of renewal and abundance, as well as a destruction of local economies.

This destruction of nature's economy and peoples' economies is never taken into account by modern economics, and hence processes that lead to ecological destruction and poverty and deprivation for millions are presented as 'growth' in national accounts and the global economy. However, it is not growth when assessed in terms of the health of ecosystems and societies. This contrived pseudo-growth camouflages the destruction it unleashes on the lives of Third World communities.

A good example of such pseudo-growth is in Third World agriculture. The shift from a 'food first' to an 'export first' agricultural policy in India is justified on grounds of food security, because export earnings are supposed to pay for food imports. In fact, export-oriented agriculture has reduced food security by encouraging a shift from small-scale, sustainable local production to large-scale, non-sustainable industrial production. It also brings changes in ownership over natural resources and means of production, from small autonomous producer/owners to large corporate interests. Peasants are displaced from farming, while commercial interests take over land for production of export commodities. These enterprises often have negative environmental impacts, creating further hardship for local communities.

Meat, vegetable, shrimp and flower exports, for example, have costs that often far exceed the earnings generated. Large-scale meat exports have an external 'shadow' cost that is 10 times higher than export earnings. This is due to the former ecological contribution of livestock in small-scale agriculture, now on the wane.

Particularly in developing countries, livestock is not just meat on legs. Livestock in India helps pro-

NO

duce \$17million-worth of milk and \$1.5billion-worth of food grain; they also provide \$17million-worth of energy. If the animals are slaughtered, all these benefits are lost. In the case of one export-oriented slaughterhouse alone, meat exports earned \$45million, whereas the estimated contribution of the slaughtered animals to the economy if they had been allowed to live was \$230million.

Multidimensional, multifunctional economies based on mutuality are being systematically destroyed by a development model which is unable to take diversity, reciprocity, complexity and sustainability into account. It is time to ask the basic questions: growth of what? Development for whom? It is time to move beyond the fictions and illusions of economic growth which siphons wealth from the poor to the rich, and take into account the reality of ecological catastrophes and social disintegration that have been unleashed by 'development' processes and which leave the poor poorer.

Hoping that the new millennium will bring new economic thinking based on principles of inclusion rather than exclusion.

Vandana Shiva

Dear Vandana Shiva,

Thank you for starting such a stimulating and important debate. Let us first see what, on the evidence of your letter, we agree upon.

We are both against 'tied aid', namely aid or lending which, sometimes by accident but often intentionally, primarily gives business to rich-country firms. I am, incidentally, pretty sceptical of all aid except when it is given to relieve a specific humanitarian crisis (such as famine, natural disaster or war) because it is so often tied, and because it tends to make the recipients less self-sufficient. 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you feed him for life,' runs the old Chinese cliché, and it is a very valuable point.

We are both against the forced removal of people from their homes. I oppose this on every ground, whether it is development, national security, national cultural or environmental policy, or whatever. Furthermore, you seem to equate 'nature's economy' and 'peoples' economies', while my observation suggests that these quite often are not identical, even at a local level.

We are both against the capital-intensive 'gigantism' of many dams, superhighways and so on. These generally (though not always) are based on the idea, pioneered by Stalin and Mao and often copied by Nehru and his successors, that poor countries must leap into a capital-intensive, industrial economy. From such centrally planned policies, people rarely benefit and nor does the economy.

Finally, we are also both against monopolies that can force customers (in your example, farmers) to buy goods they would not buy if given a free choice (in your example, seeds that require undue amounts

of herbicide and that are designed not to reproduce). This does not, however, make me against all genetic engineering: seeds that allow farmers to use fewer pesticides, for example, or less fertiliser, strike me as likely to be useful. The choice, though, must remain with the farmer, and the role of national and local government should be to ensure that farmers retain that choice.

So where do we disagree? Judging by your letter, we seem to face three fundamental disagreements.

First, on the nature of the starting point. You say that 'multidimensional, multifunctional economies based on mutuality' are being destroyed. I find it hard to accept this as a good description of, for instance, the India either of today or of recent decades. To me, your phrase would be a good description of Britain, as long as you were to agree that the free exchanges, of jobs and spending and ideas and family development, enjoyed by 55 million Britons, can be called 'mutuality'. That is certainly what we have thought of it as, ever since Adam Smith's two great 18th-century works, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations*. But in India, my observation is that Nehruvian Socialism brought widespread damage to the multidimensional, multifunctional nature of a country already badly damaged by the British Empire (of which, by the way, I am ashamed), bringing in more monopolies, gigantism, rigid state enterprises, rigid state regulation and pollution from unaccountable big businesses, while simultaneously failing to improve literacy, health or other welfare measures at anything like the pace achieved since 1950 by other similarly endowed Asian countries.

Second, on the role of profit. Please accept my apologies if I am mistaken, but you seem to believe that the incomes of 'corporations' and of 'commercial interests' are of a different nature, and of a different moral or social value, from the incomes of farmers, small 'producer/owners' and 'peasants'. To me, they are the same. Neither is better nor worse than the other. Profits are, like it or not, the prime incentives for human behaviour and allocation of resources. And both big business and small farmers are prone to fail to take account of real costs that are not being given, in our societies, a monetary value: namely, environmental and other social costs.

Which brings in the third point of probable disagreement, on how to think about and deal with environmental costs. It certainly is not easy, and many economists (though not, I would claim, *The Economist*) are too reluctant to accept that ways need to be found to take such costs into account. I feel that the only way to do this in a sustainable and equitable way is to use market mechanisms themselves, by imposing taxes or offering subsidies in such a way as to lead, for example, farmers to make their choices about products and processes in a way that takes in (democratically determined) 'shadow' costs. I always distrust government, since it so



Bill Emmott has been editor of *The Economist*, based in London, since 1993. The author of three books on Japan, last year he wrote a 25,000 word article for his magazine on the 20th century, called *Freedom's Journey*, which he is now developing into a book.

YES

My contention is that in those parts of the Third World where, during the past half century, development has been permitted to take place, people have benefited hugely

Bill Emmott

often, in all countries, leads to corruption and to arrogance. I would want these measures to be used at as local a level as possible, so that the imposers were close to local conditions and subject to local accountability.

That, I would suggest, is the way forward for any country, whether Third World or First World. The 'development model' I favour stresses freedom, competition and the profit motive, within the accountability framework of the rule of law and local democracy. South Korea, I would acknowledge, has followed only some of these points. But if I were, for example, a 70-year-old Bengali, I might well feel that I would rather my region had, during my lifetime, done more of the things that South Korea did, from a similar starting point in 1950 or 1960. I suspect you disagree. What, then, is your model?

Bill Emmott

Dear Bill,

It is interesting how rapidly our debate on development, the global economy and the environment has moved on to assumptions about 'human nature'.

Your basic assumption is that greed is the predominant human trait, and that 'profits are the prime incentives for human behaviour and allocation of resources'. You have universalised your values and imposed them on all of humanity, even though most of us do not live our lives guided by profits. We could not care for our children and future generations, we could not live in communities, we could not protect our forests and rivers if profits were the only calculus and competition our only logic.

Ignoring ecological limits, globalisation and free trade have elevated greed and the profit motive to the organising principle of society, eclipsing our human values and marginalising diverse cultures which organise themselves on other lines.

The profit motive and logic of 'competition' on which your 'development model' is based is creating gigantism and monopolistic control which dwarfs the projects of Mao, Stalin and Nehru. The super-highways, ports, thermal power plants and chemical factories being built by global corporations in post-Nehruvian India are displacing more people and destroying more fragile ecosystems than all the destructive development of the past fifty years.

The mergers of America Online and Time Warner, Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham, Cargill and Continental, Monsanto and Upjohn, for example, are creating giant monopolies. The limitless profits made by these monopolies cannot be equated morally and socially with the small and limited incomes of peasants, tribal peoples, craftspeople and other autonomous producers. Peasants I work with return organic fertility to the soil and replenish biodiversity through mutual exchange. Corporations, on the other hand, relate to nature and the 'Third World' as a one-way flow of resource extraction for unlimited profits.

Peasants and small producers are real people with multiple identities, multiple roles, multiple rights and duties. Corporations are legal fictions with only one function: profit maximisation. Your argument seems to suggest that people everywhere measure worth primarily or exclusively in terms of monetary value. But the problem with monetary value is that it reflects all the gender, race, class and ecological biases of the world's dominant (Western) culture – it is not a neutral, universal measure.

We cannot have global laws (such as those being drawn up in the WTO) to protect freedom of commerce, but only local systems to protect nature and people, as you suggest. It is this asymmetry between the rights of corporations and the rights of citizens under globalisation which mobilised thousands of protesters in Seattle last December.

Like me, the thousands of women, young people, farmers, workers and environmentalists who gathered in Seattle believe in co-operation rather than competition, compassion rather than greed, diversity rather than monoculture, economic democracy rather than corporate monopoly, and decentralisation rather than gigantism.

I would like to hear your reflections on corporate gigantism and corporate rule today, and the threat this poses to democracy and sustainability.

Vandana Shiva

Dear Vandana,

I find it interesting, and a pity, that you think that the word 'profit' and the word 'greed' are the same thing. I certainly do not believe so, and I do not assume that greed is the predominant human trait. If it was, then life would be miserable indeed. I would not want to live in such a world.

Let me substitute the word 'benefit' for 'profit'. Farmers, big or small, plant the crops and keep the livestock that they think will bring them the most benefit, either directly by meeting their families' needs for food, or indirectly by providing them with produce to exchange with others for other produce and services they need. By their own sense of benefit, honed through generations of experience, they plant what they think are the best crops for their own interests, and to give their families and associates the best chance of survival and happiness.

This self-interest is not the only value by which people operate, nor is it blind to the virtues of co-operation and compassion. But it would be wrong, I believe, to pretend that people the world over, and since the beginning of time, have not directed their activities according to their views of their own benefit, sometimes narrowly defined, more often (and better) broadly defined.

And what of companies? They are not 'legal fictions'. They are groups of people, real people like you and me, or the staff of *The Ecologist*, who work together in voluntary cooperation. Modern companies are owned by the pension funds held by millions of ordi-

nary people. They are groups of co-operating individuals in which there is no longer a sensible distinction between 'bosses' and 'workers'. I see no reason why 50,000 people working in a group called 'a company' should be given a moral and social value lower than (or, indeed, higher than) 50,000 people working as small farmers or craftspeople.

Like other groups, these corporate groups are capable of either good or evil, of operating well or badly. I neither laud the individual as especially morally worthy nor the group. Communities of all kinds in all countries have been shown to be capable of religious-led slaughter, genocide, environmental degradation, exploitation of others, and many other evils. Sometimes these groups have been corporations, sometimes tribes, sometimes armies, sometimes smaller, local groups.

In all cases what is essential is the rule of law, and the balance provided by competition from, and scrutiny by, other groups, all of which is only possible in an open society. Such a balance is the means by which large companies – which is what all the merged firms you name are, since none is a monopoly – can be and should be kept in check. My belief is that the World Trade Organisation is part of that process of establishing the rule of law and keeping a check on such groups. It is not sufficient to achieve this on its own, but it is necessary. It is necessary if people wish to trade across borders, and do so equitably.

Our mutual concern is with people. In my first letter, I suggested that a 70-year-old Bengali might well, looking back, believe that he would rather his country or province had, during his lifetime, acted like fairly open trading South Korea rather than the closed, state-led, Nehruvian system that India has followed until recently, for Korea has 'developed' more successfully, and to greater benefit for its people, than has India. Do you think I am wrong?

Bill Emmott

Dear Bill,

Since you seem so fixed on the opinion of a 70-year-old Bengali, I asked an audience in Calcutta when I was in the city recently if they would have preferred to go the Korean way rather than the Indian. I am afraid not one person in the 2,000-strong audience voted in support of your assumption.

By the way, the chosen ideology of Bengal is not Nehruvian Socialism but Marxism. For the past 30 years, Bengalis have voted Marxists into power, and have prospered through equity, especially in land reform. For the Bengali peasant, secure in land ownership, the government has created an open society. In Karnataka, where land reform has been undone by removing limits on land ownership, and peasants are losing their land to large corporations for growing export crops, trade liberalisation is closing off their future. What is an open society and what is a closed society depends on where one is located in it.

Societies free for corporations are becoming unfree for people.

You are misplaced to equate traditional producers with modern corporations. The moral, cultural, ecological and economic worlds they inhabit are utterly different. The world of the traditional farmer is governed by human relations; relations with ancestors and future generations, with the common, the sacred, the right and the wrong, the good and the bad. The world of the latter is governed by the dollar.

We need to move beyond both the State and the global market, to create economic democracies in which people and nature are at the centre of economic organisation. Democracy cannot be reduced to competition law, nor equated with freedom for capital. Democracy is freedom for people.

Vandana Shiva

Dear Vandana,

My contention is that in those parts of the Third World where, during the past half century, development has been permitted to take place, people have benefited hugely: in their welfare, health, lifespan, range of choices and, though I know this is a dirty word for you, income. These places are predominantly in East Asia, such as South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan. They were as poor, or sometimes poorer, than India (and indeed Bengal) in the 1950s. The process has been far from perfect, and it has been riddled with abuses. Plenty needs to be done to make it better. But it has been far, far better than the alternative (little or no development).

What I am 'fixed on', as you put it, is people: the 1.2 billion who live in extreme poverty; the billions more who have stunted lives, with poor diets, a lack of access to health and education, a lack of opportunity to make a difference for themselves and for their children. The point of development is, or should be, those people: to give them opportunities and freedoms to change and improve their lives, if that is what they want.

This is never going to be possible without capitalism, though capitalism alone is insufficient. That is what Jyoti Basu and his 'Marxist' colleagues in Bengal have now realised, as they told me when I visited Calcutta last April.

The small farmer is also a capitalist, and needs to be given the opportunities to arrange his business for his own benefit. If that includes selling his land to a corporation, or growing crops for export, those choices should be available to him. The biggest obstacle to that is rich-country protectionists who seek to keep out Third World farm products. Another is people who seek to stop farmers having that freedom of choice. Democracy is freedom for people, as you say; but it is people who own capital; and your model seeks to deny them, big or small, from using their capital as they see fit. That is no democracy. Nor will it help improve the lives of the billions of the poor.

Bill Emmott

Globalisation and free trade have elevated greed and the profit motive to the organising principle of society

Vandana Shiva



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ACADEMIC FREEDOM: IS IT DYING OUT?

Arpad Pusztai became a household name in 1998 when his GM potato research angered the biotechnology industry and lost him his job. Here he explains for the first time what happened and why he believes academic freedom in science is in danger of extinction.

Science originates from our natural curiosity to find out about the world and ourselves. To be truly free, it must be pursued objectively and dispassionately, and must not be driven by thoughts of profit, glory or material gain. This may seem common sense, but increasingly, today, science is being compromised by commercial interests, as I personally discovered to my cost in 1998.

I had worked at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland, for 35 years, first as a Principal Scientific Officer, then a Senior Research Fellow. In June 1998, I was asked to appear on the television programme *World In Action*, to talk about my research into GM foodstuffs. I wanted to highlight the need for a case-by-case programme of biological testing of all genetically modified (GM) foodstuffs, particularly because our group at the Institute had done some pioneering studies on novel methods of biological testing.

My appearance on the programme was recorded in late June with the consent of Professor WTP James, the Director of the Rowett Institute, and in the presence of the Institute's PR officer. Everything seemed to go as planned. I kept to an agreement made beforehand with the Institute, and only talked about the necessity of biological testing of GM foodstuffs before they were accepted into the human food chain. I released no confidential experimental details, or even identified the gene we used in our work. I believed then – and I thought the Rowett agreed with me – that our nutritional and immunological work on two distinct lines of GM potatoes expressing the GNA gene could have been a good starting point for a biological testing programme for GM foods.

The interview went well, and the Rowett seemed happy with the publicity. The director even phoned my wife after the broadcast to congratulate me on how well I handled the interview. Rowett press releases on 10 and 11 August, and another by the Rowett Governing Body chairman, were full of praise for our work 'of strategic importance to our country and European Union consumers... A range of carefully controlled studies underlie the basis of Dr Pusztai's concerns,' they stated, supporting me and my work clearly and publicly.

Then, rapidly, everything began to change. To begin with, the Rowett made what I consider to be two unfortunate mistakes. To begin with, it did not keep to our pre-agreed line of not releasing scientific details to the media and, furthermore, did not check with me about the accuracy of some crucial press releases of 10 August. Second, once the programme had been aired and the press releases sent out, the Rowett decided that, from 10 August, all enquiries about my interview and my work be dealt with not by me but by the Rowett's director, who was unfamiliar with the details of my research. From the combination of these events, major scientific mistakes were made, with the director giving unintentionally misleading statements to the media about the details of my work.

Perhaps the director realised the error late in the afternoon of 11 August, because he then tried to extricate himself from the responsibility for telling the media about experiments which had never been done by laying the blame on me, claiming that I got 'muddled' in my

interview. He even suggested that I had never conducted any GM-potato experiments at all, but had just supplemented ordinary potato diets with the poisonous chemical Concanavalin A – a blatant factual error.

Whatever his precise motivation, the Rowett's director swung round, in a matter of hours, from publicly supporting my work to publicly attacking my very integrity. For me, this was a great shock. No one had ever maligned me or my work in this way before – least of all my own employer. At the time I had no idea what was happening.

It is worth remembering at this point that I have never claimed that all GM foods are unsafe, or that biotechnology *per se* is dangerous. All I have said is that my work suggested GM foods may pose dangers to human health, and that more work needs to be done on this subject, particularly as GM foodstuffs already accepted have never been tested by methods similar to those used in our GM potato studies.

Perhaps, however, even these comments were too much for the sensitive biotechnology industry, for at this point, events took a Kafkaesque turn. James started to use the official restrictive rules under which all scientists have to work in our academic system. First he suspended me, then, by instituting an audit, he gagged me on 12 August. All my data was confiscated. My phone was redirected to his office and my emails were intercepted. The director then wrote me a series of letters in which he explicitly threatened me with legal action if I spoke to anyone in or outside the Rowett about our work. He also warned Rowett staff of the dire consequences if anyone spoke to me.

I discovered later that the director had no right to set up the audit because I was not accused of scientific fraud by the Rowett – the only legitimate scientific reason for an audit. Drawing erroneous conclusions from our GM-potato work – the offence of which I was wrongly

accused – was not a serious enough offence to warrant an audit. To my mind, the entire point of the audit was to create a 'show trial'. None of the many nutritionists at the Rowett were appointed to the audit committee set up to judge my work, no proper statistical analyses of my findings were carried out by the committee, and I was given no opportunity to explain my work and the director's mistakes. The whole audit was over in less than 10 hours. Needless to say, it decided against me.

I was then suspended from all GM-related work, which in reality meant I was cut off from all research. The whole GM programme was stopped, our group was dispersed and none of its members were allowed to carry out further work on GM or related projects. Our results, my three PhD students and all our funding were summarily taken from me by the Rowett. I was left to my own devices in my office to fill out the remaining four months of my contract.

THE WITCH-HUNT CONTINUES

Astonishingly, this was not the end of the matter. It was apparently felt that I had not been slandered and discredited enough by the scientific and political establishment. The House of Commons Science



The interview went well, and the Rowett seemed happy with the publicity. The director even phoned to congratulate my wife.

and Technology Committee, Royal Society (RS), Committee on Toxicology, Advisory Committee on Novel Food Processes (ACNFP), and the Nuffield Foundation Bioethics Committee all produced virtually identical, and equally damning, reports on my work within the space of a few days in May 1999, allowing Jack Cunningham to stand up in parliament a couple of days later and decree that there was 'no credible scientific evidence' to show that GM food was harmful. None of these reports included any direct input from me – indeed, except for the Science and Technology Committee, none of these institutions even asked me about my work when preparing them. Furthermore, the results of independent multivariate statistical analysis of my data, peer-reviewed by a group of independent scientists who praised my work, were conspicuously absent from any of these reports. Most tellingly, none of these institutions would disclose whether they, or those preparing the reports, had any links with the biotechnology industry.

Despite all these public attempts to discredit me and my work, I received some crucial support from other independent scientists. Dr Stanley Ewen at Aberdeen University, who had carried on with my work after I was suspended from the Rowett, submitted, with me, a paper to the medical journal *The Lancet* at the end of 1998. The draft paper had gone through three separate bouts of refereeing by a total of six referees and was finally accepted and published on 15 October 1999.⁽¹⁾ According to the editor of *The Lancet*, five of the referees were in favour of publication and one was against. Despite this, the one referee who was against publication broke a 200-year-old rule of not discussing referees' comments, by going to the media and attacking my paper. These comments were then picked up and distorted, to further discredit my work, and muddy the waters on the GM issue.

LESSONS WE MUST LEARN

What does my experience say about science in Britain today? For a start it tells us to ask serious questions about the future of independent science. What example is shown to young scientists when they see an independent senior scientist, such as myself, who belongs to no pressure group, has no financial interests for or against GM and who has an unblemished track record of scientific achievement, attacked in this way? Which young scientist is likely to start working on GM-related topics that may come to critical conclusions? And what does it tell the world about academic freedom when an editor of a respected scientific journal is attacked and pilloried by a senior Fellow of the Royal Society for publishing a peer-reviewed scientific paper approved by the vast majority of its reviewers?

Today, the industrial scientist's situation is straightforward: he/she is not a free agent but is hired for a particular job which is restricted in scope and objectives and carried out under close supervision. Data obtained becomes the property of the company that pays for the research. In most instances, the scientist has no rights to discuss or publish the results without the permission of the company and the company may withhold publication for five years, particularly if the results are



Scientific Truth: the Hot Potato

DR PUSZTAI PUTS HIS EXPERIENCE IN CONTEXT

In modern times, it was perhaps the 'gentleman scientists' of the nineteenth century who came closest to a genuinely objective form of scientific research. These privileged amateurs enjoyed a financial independence which many scientists today would kill for, and which enabled them to satisfy their scientific curiosity without the need to please patrons.

With the almost exponential growth of scientific research, and the emergence of the professional scientist after the Second World War, science has become an expensive occupation. Many scientists today look back upon the 1960s as a Golden Age of modern-day science, when research was mainly funded by the taxpayer, and scientific enquiry was seen by governments to be part of the public good; something worth paying for.

Today, the situation is very different. 'Academic freedom' is now often little more than an illusion for most scientists working at universities or in publicly-funded research institutes, and is often so compromised by the interests of the corporate world that it can hardly be called science, in the true meaning of the word.

How to explain this development? Why has science moved from the relative freedoms of the past to its present-day form – a regimented, money-driven, compartmentalised, dogmatic and narrowly focused science 'industry'?

COMMERCE TAKES OVER

No doubt the model of scientific enquiry followed from the 1940s to the 1960s was very expensive, and governments seeking to reduce the overall financial burden on the state saw scientific research as an obvious candidate for cost-cutting. The Thatcher government took its axe to publicly-funded research by invoking dogmatic principles to select which research topics were 'useful' and thus entitled to receive state support.

First, Mrs Thatcher's government introduced the 'Rothschild Principles' (named after one of her favourite scientific advisers) at the beginning of the 1980s, according to which only research which produced a 'useful' end-product – essentially one that would be financially promising, or could be patented for the benefit of British industry – should be financed. Anything else was regarded as frivolous, and not entitled to state support. A decade later, a new law was introduced, according to which any 'near-market' research (research likely to lead to commercial end-products) should either be entirely financed by industry or, if public funds were to be used, should be spent in 'strategic alliance' with business.

This was a key turning point in the move towards the profit-driven science that increasingly dominates today. The Thatcher government's cost-cutting actions led scientists into the open arms of industry, where so many of them remain. With the state increasingly unwilling to fund novel or important research, and with the costs of that research growing as science advances, it is increasingly difficult to see how scientists can maintain – or regain – the independence they so vitally need if they are to do their jobs properly.

THE BIOTECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION

It is these developments which underlie the beginnings of the 'biotechnology revolution' we are now seeing, in which large, often transnational, pharmaceutical, agricultural and food corporations increasingly extract support from governments in exchange for taking over the financing of scientific research, most of it based on gene manipulation.

Biotechnology research is rapidly becoming almost a quasi-religious crusade for many governments. Advised by 'experts', most of them directly or indirectly funded by the industry, ministers have been issuing constant reassurances that this new 'safe' technology will be the salvation of mankind in the 21st century, stop-

patentable. Even university or government research scientists are not in a much better situation. When hired, they are required to sign a contract which places them under the rulebook of the BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biology Science Research Council) or the MRC (Medical Research Council). Even if the actual contract is not signed, by accepting his/her salary, the scientist tacitly agrees to the terms and rules of the contract, which greatly restrict his or her work and hand his or her director ultimate sanction over results, publication and interpretation.

It seems that, in the eyes of many senior scientists today, the future of science lies with industry. When scientists who apparently have no obvious financial connection with the biotech industry defend GM crops so blindly, and attack even the mildest critics, slandering their work and abilities in the process, we must ask ourselves what motivates them. And one possible motivation is that, with the rapid disappearance of the State patronage of science, many of these people are genuinely worried about the future funding of scientific research.

Perhaps they feel that the only chance for the survival of research in the 21st century is to set up an alliance with industry. So they may have to embrace this new creed wholeheartedly, warts and all, and throw their whole weight

behind genetic manipulation, regardless of what they may individually think about its merits.

UNDER THE YOKE?

But this is a very dangerous attitude. By accepting money from an industry which has aggressively set out to dominate many aspects of life and society, science and scientists are becoming servants of multinational concerns whose motives are at best questionable and at worst positively detrimental. The alternative seems to me to be clear: we must help the public to understand that if they want independent scientific advice in today's complex world, they will have to pay for it, somehow, from the public purse. This will then release scientists from their servitude to 'big business'. Furthermore, scientists must be, and be seen to be, transparent. They must publicly declare all financial or other interests, just as MPs are obliged to do. Only in this way can we begin to win back the public trust we have often deservedly lost. The time has come to remind our peers and politicians that any democratic society which suppresses academic freedom and the inventiveness of the individual is, ultimately, stifling its own development. ♦

Arpad Pusztai, born in Hungary, came to Britain as a political refugee in 1956. After obtaining a BSc in Physiology and PhD in Biochemistry at the University of London, he joined the Rowett Research Institute, where he worked until 1998. He has published eight books and 280 scientific papers.

Further Reading

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ping deforestation, increasing food production, feeding the starving and making the rest of us rich. Anyone standing in the way of biotechnology, or even questioning some of its more shaky tenets, is instantly declared a 'Luddite', trying to reverse scientific progress.

Such apparent unanimity of purpose between scientists, politicians and industry should ring alarm bells with those concerned to maintain the independence of science. Research grants which slavishly reflect the government obsession with biotechnology have caused a great deal of confusion in the scientific community, and increasingly it is only those who can quickly adapt their research to the new guidelines – mainly embracing gene technologies – who have any real chance of obtaining funding from the research councils. Without at least a component of some DNA-oriented research in the overall work package, chances of getting money are slim. Meanwhile, grants to promote studies on the health, nutritional or environmental consequences of gene manipulation have for some time been conspicuous by their absence.

The biotechnology industry's stranglehold over gene research goes a long way to explaining why, in the past 17 years, there has been only one peer-reviewed scientific paper published on the possible nutritional effects of a GM crop – 'Roundup-Ready' soya, in 1996⁽¹⁾. This single example says an enormous amount about the sort of research which gets done in this age of commercially-driven science.

It is explained partly by the fact that research topics which the biotech industry is willing to support are based on genetic manipulation, usually with relatively narrow and highly applied remits, which, in most instances, are not suitable for publication in top journals. But the lack of published research on the safety aspects of biotechnology is also explained by the fact that the results of such research, when paid for by biotech companies, are regarded as the property of the industry, and publication can thus be postponed or even prevented if the industry doesn't

like what it hears. Such conditions have been anything but conducive to novel, imaginative and fundamental research. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, under such conditions, academic freedom is little more than an illusion.

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AFTER SEATTLE: WHERE NEXT FOR THE WTO?

Simon Retallack explores what really happened at the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organisation last December, and asks where the WTO – and its opponents – should go from here.

Late last year, on the streets and in the conference rooms of Seattle, the most north-westerly city of the USA, there was an unmistakable feeling in the air: the sensation of history being made. In Seattle, the supposedly unstoppable force of economic globalisation faced its first major setback of the post-Cold War era at the hands of an unprecedented alliance of citizens' groups and government delegates from around the world. The principal target and casualty of their protests was the launch of a new 'millennium' round of trade talks by an institution that the majority of the world's public and media had been largely unaware of until Seattle – the World Trade Organisation.

The WTO came into existence in January 1995 as a result of eight years of negotiations between 125 countries during the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It operates from Geneva, Switzerland, and has a membership of 135 countries. Its main official functions are to administer and enforce more than 20 international trade-related agreements, resolve trade disputes between states and provide a forum for global trade negotiations.

That, at least, is the formal, innocuous-sounding purpose of the WTO. But strip away the bland bureaucratic façade, and the organisation reveals



a more destructive nature. The *raison d'être* of the WTO is to eliminate 'barriers to international trade' – barriers which, according to WTO rules, include not only quotas and tariffs on products crossing national borders, but any impediments to corporate profit-making, such as national, regional or local laws protecting consumers, workers or the environment.

This agenda is forced through by tribunals made up of panels of three trade bureaucrats who have usually made legal careers representing corporate clients on trade issues. They meet in secret and have legally binding powers of enforcement, which include the ability to impose economically severe trade sanctions on offending states.

The Economist has called the WTO 'an embryo world government', and yet not an electorate on the planet has voted for it, nor is it in any meaningful way accountable to the public. Worse – at every opportunity during its five-year existence, the WTO has sacrificed the public interest on the altar of free trade and corporate gain.

THE WTO'S RECORD

So far, among the national laws that WTO panels have ruled against and consequently caused to be weakened are the US Clean Air Act, the US Endangered Species Act, and Japan's pesticide residue standards for food. The WTO has also ruled against the EU's ban on imports of potentially health-threatening hormone-treated beef, and the EU's banana importing regime, designed to give preferential access to bananas produced by small farmers in the Caribbean. In these two cases, the WTO authorised the imposition of sanctions of \$128million and \$190million respectively per year until the EU implements its rulings.

Crucially, in every single one of these cases, WTO panels sided with the corporate parties involved: Venezuelan and Brazilian oil companies, Asian shrimp companies, and US fruit and beef companies respectively.

The WTO's track record is now such that the mere threat of WTO action is usually sufficient to persuade countries to change their national laws to be 'WTO-compliant'. Under this so-called 'chilling-effect', the US, for example, has succeeded in substantially weakening an EU ban on the import of fur from animals caught with cruel 'steel jaw' leg traps. At a sub-national level, the Governor of California recently vetoed his state's 'Buy Californian Act', a bill giving locally manufactured goods a 5 per cent preference for state and local government purchases, because he said it would violate WTO rules.

All of these cases are symptomatic of far more serious, deep-seated trends that are being promoted. Environmental degradation, threats to public health, unemployment, income inequality, food insecurity, loss of cultural diversity and threats to human rights are all being exacerbated by the WTO and its agreements.

Despite the WTO's record, the world's two largest trading blocks intended to use the organisation's Third Ministerial Conference in

Seattle – between 30 November and 3 December 1999 – to further expand the WTO's power.

The United States wanted the WTO to set up a working group to adopt new rules that would ensure unfettered 'market access' globally for genetically modified products, despite growing environmental and health concerns. Another US priority was the adoption by the WTO of an 'Advanced Tariff Liberalisation Initiative' which, amongst other things, would have eliminated tariffs on forestry and fish products by 2004. This would have increased global demand for these products as their cost fell. The result: increased deforestation and further depletion of the world's already over-fished oceans.

An additional key US goal was the elimination of primarily European and Japanese agricultural tariffs and subsidies. While this could have had some positive environmental consequences, it could also have undermined small-scale, chemical-free agriculture, often dependent on subsidies and tariffs to avoid being undercut by floods of cheaper, industrially produced imports.

The American government also wanted to expand the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to include new sectors such as health and education.

This would have given foreign corporations the right to take over, own and operate publicly owned hospitals and schools within any WTO member country. Yet another US goal still was to extend the WTO's Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) to all plant and animal parts, to enable them to be patented and controlled by corporations; depriving millions of farmers of the right to save and use their own seeds without having to pay corporations to do so. The EU's priority, meanwhile, was to expand the WTO's powers over investment, competition and procurement policy. The EU thereby sought to give foreign corporations the right to invest, undertake mergers or corporate takeovers, and bid for public procurement initiatives in each member country, free of any social or environmental conditions or discrimination with regard to subsidies or contracts. The EU's plans would have entailed, essentially, a return of the notorious Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) that had been defeated by public protest in 1998.

These overwhelmingly corporate-driven agendas, moreover, were to be negotiated in secret (as has been the norm for each world trade round), without the participation or endorsement of the public, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or, as it turned out, even the majority of the WTO's member governments.

Shut out of the process, alienated and disgusted by much of what was being negotiated, over 40,000 people came to Seattle to take to the historical recourse of last resort – the street. The result was the largest, most extraordinary demonstration in America since the Vietnam



What made the difference in Seattle, according to several delegates, was the atmosphere of dissent generated by the demonstrators on the streets, the encouragement of NGOs in the conference hall, and the scrutinising presence of the world's media.

TAKING TO THE STREETS

Shut out of the process, alienated and disgusted by much of what was being negotiated, over 40,000 people came to Seattle to take to the historical recourse of last resort – the street. The result was the largest, most extraordinary demonstration in America since the Vietnam

War, led by a rainbow coalition of labour, environmental, consumer, farming, human rights, and pro-democracy groups from around the world.

The official reaction to the protests demonstrated an authoritarian intolerance of dissent that spoke volumes about the nature of the WTO and its attitude towards ordinary people. It showed millions globally that there must be something very wrong with this institution if it needs to defend itself by firing at overwhelmingly peaceful protesters with rubber bullets, canisters of tear gas and excruciating pepper spray; charging people on horseback and with armoured cars; arresting hundreds (though not any of the 40-or-so black-hooded 'anarchists' causing the widely reported violence); and imposing an armed curfew over the area in which it was meeting.

The drama on the streets, meanwhile, was mirrored by what took place inside the negotiations, which, to general astonishment, suddenly collapsed in chaos, confusion and failure late on 3 December. If you believe the humiliated supporters of the WTO, this outcome was essentially the product of 'mismanagement', whereas the impact of the opposition of civil society was 'minimal'.

In reality, the role of the protests was far more important. Until Seattle, trade negotiations and summits had taken place without the presence, in any significant number, of protesters, NGOs or the media. Indeed, the launch of the last world trade round in Punta del Este in Uruguay in 1986 took place 'in the silence of public apathy,' as Mike Moore, the WTO's current director-general, put it. This meant that government trade officials could make deals fulfilling an essentially Western, corporate agenda and impose it on the rest of the world with impunity. In Seattle, all that changed.

THE POWER OF PROTEST AND GRASSROOTS OPPOSITION

Years of quiet educating and coalition-building on world trade issues by groups such as Public Citizen, the Third World Network, the International Forum on Globalisation and many others finally paid off at Seattle. Not only did 2,000 NGOs turn up with a veritable army of around 40,000 protesters, but an unprecedented alliance was forged between groups that represent a vast spectrum of societal concerns – including, crucially, on labour and environmental issues –

united in common opposition to the WTO and its aims. They sent a direct message to the world's governments that civil society would not tolerate a World Trade Organisation, or any new trade round that failed to address social and environmental concerns and that merely served the interests of large corporations and their shareholders.

The protesters were powerful and numerous enough not to be ignored; deriving strength not just from their numbers and diversity, but, above all, from the fact that their message resonated loudly with important electoral constituencies and the wider public. The scale and drama of the demonstrations also drew the largest media presence to any world trade meeting in history, enabling the protesters' message to be relayed to an audience of hundreds of millions worldwide. Members of the media, many of whom were learning on the spot about the WTO for the first time themselves, also scrutinised the negotiations as they never had before. All of this made it far easier (or far more important) for governments to resist the usual pressures to conform and agree a deal at all costs; creating the conditions for the development of unbridgeable divisions among the WTO's member governments which ultimately brought the talks to their knees.

Thus the objections of small farmers and their supporters demonstrating in Seattle, reflecting the views of powerful domestic farming constituencies, provided a serious incentive for the countries of the EU, with support from Japan and South Korea, to resist attempts by the US and the Cairns Group of 18 agricultural exporting nations to force them to eliminate agricultural subsidies and tariffs. Hence EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy's acknowledgement during the talks that: 'What's happening outside is having an effect on the negotiations'. The protests, he said, made it 'even less possible' to give in on this issue.

Similarly, the hostility of the demonstrators and the vast majority of the European public towards genetically modified food made it politically hazardous for the EU to concede to the key US demand to establish a WTO working group on biotechnology that would have made it harder for countries to limit imports of biotech products. When the EU trade commissioner indicated that he might cave in on this issue, EU environment ministers, fearing the public outcry that



would result, openly objected and forced the proposal to be dropped.

The opposition of demonstrators and a large number of important US labour and environmental groups to the key EU demand to begin negotiations on a new MAI-style agreement on investment, meanwhile, made the US reluctant to concede on this issue. That further diminished the possibility of an overall deal between the US and the EU at Seattle.

THE 'THIRD WORLD' RESISTS

An even more significant factor in the ultimate collapse of the negotiations was the unprecedented opposition by the majority of developing countries – which make up two-thirds of the WTO's membership – to the launch of a new round, and their demand, opposed by the US, for the revision of elements of the previous round. In unison with the protesters, many adopted the slogan 'No new round. Turnaround'. In this, NGOs such as the Third World Network, which represents literally millions of 'Third World' citizens, were instrumental; briefing delegates about the likely adverse impacts on developing countries of the adoption of the new issues being pushed by developed countries, and of various existing agreements.

The US generated even more opposition from developing countries by refusing to rescind 'anti-dumping' legislation, which prevents the export of below-cost products to the US; refusing to implement commitments to cut quotas on imports of developing countries' textiles; and refusing to drop its proposal for the establishment of a WTO working group to look into the protection of core labour standards. The only reason the US took such a stance on these issues was because of the vocal demand of the protesters and labour unions throughout America that jobs and labour standards should not be undermined by free trade. Too many votes were now at stake, not least for presidential candidate Al Gore, for a new trade round to be launched that failed to take into account at least some of the protesters' concerns on these issues. As Sue Esserman, a US deputy trade representative said: 'The clear expression of concern by ordinary workers has to be taken into consideration, and that's exactly what we have done'.

The final straw for developing countries was the way in which they were treated during the negotiations. The WTO operated in a gross-

ly undemocratic manner in Seattle, allowing all the key decisions to be made in so-called 'Green Room' meetings of around 20 countries – excluding most developing-country delegates, who were kept in the dark, misinformed, or deprived of interpreters and accurate texts. They were essentially reduced to the role of spectators, who were nonetheless expected to provide their consent to a collection of decisions that they had virtually no part in shaping and to which they were largely opposed. Such practice has long been the norm of global trade negotiations, and developing countries, in the end, have always given in. But not this time.

What made the difference in Seattle, according to several delegates, was the atmosphere of dissent generated by the demonstrators on the streets, the encouragement of NGOs in the conference hall, and the scrutinising presence of the world's media. All of these factors gave developing countries the resolve and strength to stand firm and, for the first time, remain united in opposition to the launch of a new round.

The US hosts – unable to bridge differences by making concessions that would have infuriated the protesters and their powerful domestic constituencies, and unable to force a *fait accompli* upon the developing world without inciting their full fury before the world's TV cameras – had no option but to allow the talks to collapse.

THE FALLOUT

It is no exaggeration to claim that history was made in Seattle, for the events there have already brought fundamental change. The authority and legitimacy of the WTO have been seriously undermined, as has the WTO's guiding philosophy that people and the natural world should serve economic and corporate ends as part of an inevitable process of economic globalisation. The WTO's members are in disarray, with the governments of the EU and the US, and of the west and the developing world, still divided by substantial differences. They are unlikely to be able to make much progress in the negotiations now under way in Geneva on services and agriculture, or even attempt to launch a new trade round until a new US president is in the White House early next year. Trade negotiators are highly aware of the fact that a second defeat on the scale of Seattle would



probably be fatal for the WTO. Clearly on the defensive, they now accept that the WTO needs at least some reform and that new voices must now be heard.

Civil society, on the other hand, is stronger than ever, as is its guiding philosophy – that trade and corporate interests should be subservient to human and environmental needs. In Seattle, building on its successes against ‘fast-track’ in the US in 1997, and the MAI in 1998, civil society launched the most significant international, democratic, broad-based, grassroots challenge to global capitalism of the post-Cold War era.

It is powerful because it is more organised, united, and aware of its strength than ever before, and its message has, for the first time, reached the world’s media and, through the media, millions of people throughout the globe. It has thereby removed the keys to the WTO’s past success: ignorance and apathy. From now on, the world will be watching, making it far harder for trade ministers to strike deals that run counter to the public interest. Civil society now has a place at the top table and a voice that cannot be ignored. It has more leverage than ever.

WHERE NOW?

Civil society must now seize this unique chance, this breathing space which may last for around a year, to change the WTO and the global economy for good. It must move from opposition to proposition, demanding reform not only of the process – which clearly needs fundamental democratisation – but also the substance of the WTO and its many agreements. Civil society must make it absolutely clear that the cosmetic solutions proposed by the EU’s trade commissioner and others – a little more transparency, consultation and technical support for developing countries – are grossly insufficient.

Instead, a unifying programme for wholesale change must be developed and campaigned for that trims from the WTO every rule that threatens the ability of people – through their governments – to protect their environment, health, livelihoods, food security, cultural diversity and democratic and human rights. In order to further the ability of people to achieve these goals, the WTO must also be reformed to promote, rather than undermine, strong local economies – in other words, reversing its current role.

Developing such a programme for change will entail maintaining, strengthening and extending alliances across social sectors, across the world, through new dialogues. In particular, the developing world needs to be assured that this is in the interests of its citizens – unlike continued economic liberalisation and export-led growth.

That goal may entail rejecting the idea of using the WTO to impose global labour and environmental standards, a task, where appropriate, that is better left to the agencies of the UN by providing them with binding powers – comparable to those of the WTO – to do so.

But the WTO would still need to be reformed so that it does not undermine such standards wherever they exist. If the governments of the developing world can be persuaded on these points, civil society may well find in them powerful allies, as they too emerged strengthened from Seattle, able for the first time to exact a high price for their future co-operation. Many also share the goal of revising WTO agreements and procedures, and of resisting further WTO expansion.

If such a unifying programme for reform can be developed, civil society must then hold the governments of the US and the EU to their word. In Seattle and its aftermath, they promised to include social and environmental concerns in future deliberations: now they must deliver. And not just with regard to the WTO, but the IMF and the World Bank as well – and any other backdoor bilateral or regional attempts to fulfil similar agendas.

If they do not, they should know that they will face more opposition than ever, not least from a new generation of young people radicalised by Seattle. At each important upcoming economic event, such as the meeting of the IMF on 16 April in Washington DC, and US Congressional debates on granting China ‘Most Favoured Nation’ status as a prelude to its accession to the WTO, they will face growing resistance.

Public Citizen’s Lori Wallach argues it should be a ‘fix it or nix it’ campaign. Accordingly, if, by the time of the next WTO ministerial meeting, governments have failed to agree to the reforms demanded by civil society and are still peddling the same expansionist agenda as in Seattle, which they may well do, not only will that meeting face Seattle-scale demonstrations, but campaigns are likely to be launched to end countries’ funding and membership of the WTO.

Seattle achieved what has never been accomplished before: it exposed the world trading system to the sunlight, and as a result that system will never be the same again. How different it will be, though, depends on the ability of NGOs and citizens through-

out the world to maintain sufficient pressure on their governments to make wholesale reform a political necessity. The significance of the challenge is clear. As leading Indian activist Vandana Shiva says, this is ‘the most important democratic and human rights struggle of our time.’ It will not be easy, but Seattle has created a unique and historic opportunity for real change. Now is the time to seize it. ♦

*Simon Retallack is deputy editor of **The Ecologist’s Special Issues**. He was a researcher at the London-based think tank **Demos** and a visiting fellow at the **International Forum on Globalisation** in San Francisco, for which he has just edited and co-written a report on the environmental impact of globalisation.*

For more information on post-Seattle events see: www.tradewatch.org, www.50years.org, and www.ifg.org



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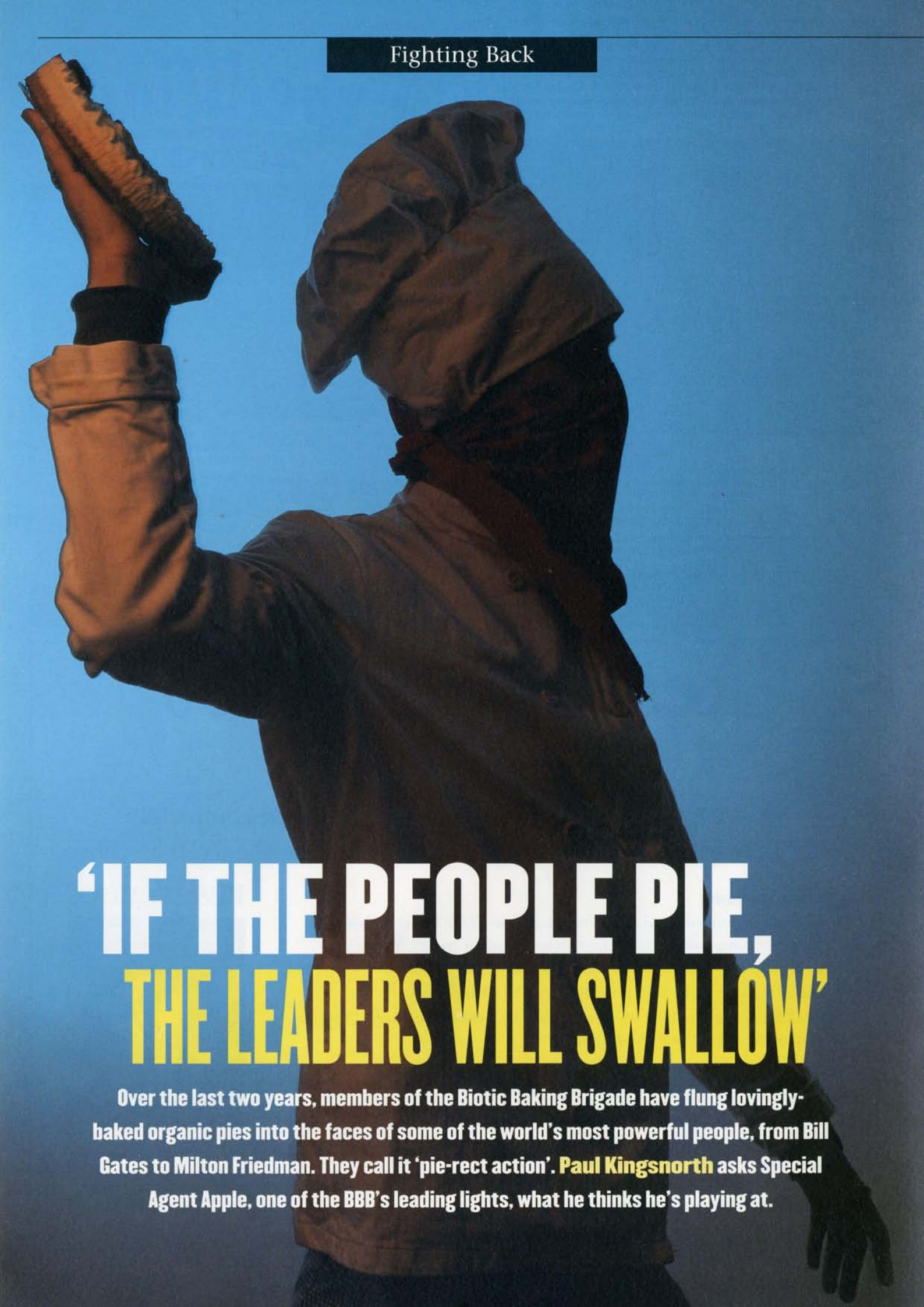


YOU ARE, THEREFORE I AM

March/April Issue

Resurgence; "The spiritual and artistic flagship of the Green Movement".

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‘IF THE PEOPLE PIE, THE LEADERS WILL SWALLOW’

Over the last two years, members of the Biotic Baking Brigade have flung lovingly-baked organic pies into the faces of some of the world’s most powerful people, from Bill Gates to Milton Friedman. They call it ‘pie-rect action’. **Paul Kingsnorth** asks Special Agent Apple, one of the BBB’s leading lights, what he thinks he’s playing at.

When Agent Apple first appeared in *The Ecologist's* editorial office, back in February, he could scarcely believe what he'd walked into. British readers may remember a minor media furore around that time, when someone calling themselves an environmental activist publicly rammed a chocolate éclair into the face of the UK's Agriculture Minister. *The Ecologist* spent an afternoon fielding phone calls from journalists after it was discovered that we had briefly hired her to help us organise an event. The editorial team ended that day not inconsiderably stressed, but Agent Apple (pictured left) was in his element. 'It's the Global Pastry Uprising!' he kept saying, with a glint in his eye. 'I tell you – if the people pie, the leaders will swallow!'

Agent Apple lives, sleeps and breathes pastry. He believes that pies could change the world, and in this belief he is not alone. For Apple (his real identity is a closely guarded secret) is a founder member of the Biotic Baking Brigade (BBB), one of the most passionate, original and, frankly, bizarre bands of radical activists around. If you haven't heard of them yet, this probably won't be the last time you do. For the Global Pastry Uprising is snowballing at surprising speed.

JUST DESSERTS

The BBB describes itself as 'an underground network of militant bakers who deliver just desserts to those in power'. Their philosophy is simple. They believe that the future of the planet is threatened by a world view that puts profit, trade and share values above life itself. And instead of waiting for politicians, bureaucrats and self-styled 'NGO leaders' to tackle this problem, they have decided to take it on themselves – with pastry, custard and cream. And so, they publicly throw pies – homebaked, vegan, organic pies, mind – into the faces of people they identify as powerful, unaccountable and responsible for crimes against the planet. They stand against 'industrial society in all its forms; against neoliberalism and technocracy, and against corporate crooks and their allies in government'. They stand for 'ecology, bioregionalism, human-scale economies – and proper gastronomics'.

Apple is one of their most active voices, and he is the perfect frontman for such a shadowy organisation. Affable, intelligent and very, well, sensible-looking, you could pass him in the street and never imagine you had come into contact with a member of an underground movement that is fast becoming legendary – probably the least violent and most entertaining revolutionary faction in history. Only the passionate light in his eyes when he talks about the 'New World Order' betrays his true calling.

'We live in a terrifying time,' he says. 'We're on the verge of ecological collapse, social structures are disintegrating, fascism – and I don't use that term lightly – is on the rise, dissent is being criminalised.' Meanwhile, he says, the 'traditional Left', which should be an active opposition, 'has become a boring, bureaucratic, unproductive movement. We want to draw attention to these problems in a way that makes people sit up and listen'.

WHY PIE?

This all sounds fair enough. But the obvious question arises: why pies? How is chucking flans around supposed to change anything?

'Actually, we have found that the pie is a tremendous vehicle to communicate issues that otherwise wouldn't get an airing in the mainstream media,' says Apple, enthusiastically. 'It's a chink in the media's armour. For example, one of the BBB's first actions was the pieing of Milton Friedman (the free-market economics guru who inspired the 1980s generation of right-wing politicians, including Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan), in October 1998. He was at a conference discussing how to privatise American education – how to take state education, this minimal concession to ordinary working people, and hand it over to corporations like Pepsi and Channel One. There was a huge picket outside – hundreds of people with placards, shouting slogans – and the media didn't cover it. But we got in, delivered one well-placed coconut crème pie, and we were all over the media, talking about the impact of his neoliberalism on the world. Pie-throwing is a form of visual Esperanto which communicates a message of dissent with which people can identify.'

Friedman was one of the BBB's early hits. Another was Bill Gates, the world's richest man, who was flanned in late 1997 by the Belgian-based group Pâtisseries sans Frontières. Monsanto boss Robert Shapiro was next, pied in a conference hall after delivering one of his notorious speeches about feeding the world with genetically modified crops. The London-based PIE (People Insurgent Everywhere) pied the then head of the World Trade Organisation, Renato Ruggiero, just a week later. 'Only 4 per cent of people in the UK had even heard of the WTO before Ruggiero was pied,' says Apple now. 'That incident put a name and face to a destructive organisation that had been largely secret.' From then on, it was no holds barred.

PIE IN THE EYE

The rapidly expanding list of pie victims includes Keith Campbell, the scientist who cloned Dolly the sheep; Charles Hurwitz, boss of Pacific Lumber, which is clearcutting forests in the Headwaters area of California where the BBB is based; Canadian Health Minister Allan Rock,

responsible for allowing GM foods into the country; film star Sylvester Stallone, pied at the opening of one of his Planet Hollywood restaurants in Montreal; Kenneth Derr, head of Chevron oil, accused of colluding with Nigeria's military regime; and several US mayors, including the Mayor of San Francisco, 'Slick' Willie Brown, who had the three BBB members who flanned him (the 'Cherry Pie Three') arrested and ultimately imprisoned for six months. The BBB's latest victim, pied just before *The Ecologist* went to press, was Michel Camdessus, outgoing head of the IMF.

More controversially, the BBB has also flanned Carl Pope, head of the US conservation group the Sierra Club, for doing a deal with Pacific Lumber which saw them accused of 'selling out' the forests. 'It may seem controversial,' says Agent Apple, 'but Pope represents one of the most dangerous threats to the environment – these kind-of backdoor salesmen, calling themselves environmentalists, who are doing deals with corporations and selling out our work from within.'

Mostly, though, it is corporate executives who are pied. 'It's our firm belief,' says Apple, firmly, 'that right now politicians and governments act as servants by helping corporations achieve their ends. These executives make decisions that affect billions of people, yet who's ever heard of them? We have to drag them into the light.' ■



A flantastic success for pie-throwers of the world, as Renato Ruggiero, former head of the World Trade Organisation, receives his just desserts in London 1999.

INS-PIE-RATIONS

The BBB is inspired by a well-whipped mix of anarchy and silent comedy. Two figures in particular motivated Apple to start baking. One is Noel Godin, the Belgian anarchist head of the International Patisserie Brigade, who has been pieing famous figures since the 1970s. He has three criteria by which he selects his victims: they should be powerful, self-important and lacking in humour. Apple's other guiding light is 'American Pieman' Aron Kay, who pied Andy Warhol, plus the director of the CIA, and others.

But the roots of pieing go back further than this. 'Pieing can be traced back to court jesters,' says Apple. 'Part of their role was to humiliate royalty or powerful people. There's always been something tremendously powerful about getting people to laugh. It's a way of engaging them in something they might otherwise have ignored.'

FLAN-ARCHY IN THE UK

Apple and the BBB talk about pieing in almost Messianic terms. They see it as a natural development of resistance. 'Pieing doesn't replace other forms of action,' says Apple, 'but it is a new creative tool in a toolbox of resistance to corporate crime.' It is catching on so fast, he says (there have been at least 60 verifiable pieing incidents around the world over the last two years, and a global flurry of interest from South Africa to Chile to Australia to Burma) because opponents of the current system are disillusioned with traditional channels of dissent.

'People are sick to death of writing letters, voting, complaining and just being ignored,' he says. 'But I think they're also sick to death of boring old lefty politics – boring demos, boring speakers. A lot of the left is bankrupt. If you're a traditional "leftist" your only option is to join a party, some kind of regime, where people think for you, take action for you, tell you what to do – that's a tremendously disempowering experience. We're trying to go beyond left/right. We want to provoke thought, and get people doing things for themselves again.'

This is important to the BBB. Members describe themselves as 'pie-throwing anarchists' and their movement is a model of self-reliance. 'What corporations and governments have done,' says Apple, 'is break our legs, then give us a crutch to walk on. But instead of appealing to our corporate masters to do things better, we want to create our own world and manage our own affairs.' It wants, says the BBB



'There's always been something tremendously powerful about getting people to laugh. It's a way of engaging them in something they might otherwise have ignored.'

simply, and probably slightly mischievously, to create 'Ecotopia' on Earth.

'We believe in DIY,' says Apple. 'A lot of us are farmers, organic gardeners – we have a lot of practical skills. And, of course, we bake all our own pies whenever we can. As long as there are quality baked goods, there is hope in this world.'

DO OR PIE

Apple himself gets his kicks from secreting pies into the corridors of power. 'For me, to put on a suit, shave, go to one of these big conferences and deliver my message in an in-your-face fashion – that's an incredibly powerful thing. That's what really cranks my chain.' But it requires planning. 'It's best to hide the pie in a briefcase to get it in – but it needs to be a solid pie, so it's firm enough to hold vertically. Another method is to dress up as a waiter or waitress. That way you can carry your pie to your victim openly, and no one will think anything of it.'

Apple's commitment to his cause seems boundless. He has, he says, been pied five times himself, and enjoyed it. He's prepared to do a lot in the name of the Global Pastry Uprising – even to dress up in a chef's outfit slightly too small for him and undergo a long photo shoot with a melting pie in *The Ecologist's* office. But he doesn't want people to think that any special skills or qualifications are required. On the contrary, he says, 'anyone can pie'.

'When people write to me and say "I want to join the BBB," I say – go for it, but do it your own way. Sure, read up on what we've done, but think for yourself. Cut your hair, look sharp, put on a suit and you can go anywhere.'

The photos finally in the can, he pulls off the scarf he uses to hide his identity from the wider world – a scarf, he says proudly, that came from Chiapas, home of the Zapatista rebellion which is

also one of the BBB's inspirations. Does he have a message for *Ecologist* readers and potential pie-rect activists? Of course he does. Agent Apple is never short of a soundbite. 'My message to readers would be simple,' he says. 'To adopt the slogan of a notorious multinational – "Just Do It!" Remember – it's better to pie on your feet than to live on your knees!'

For more information about the BBB, including its full manifesto, a history of pie-slinging, and recipe ideas, visit their website: www.asis.com/~bbb Contact the BBB at bbb@asis.com



SPECIAL VIDEO OFFER

The Pie's The Limit – a video documentary produced by and about the BBB – is a genuinely entertaining introduction to pieing. Showcasing a delicious selection of victims, including Milton Friedman, Bill Gates, Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco and others, it also features BBB members talking about their work. Well worth sniggering your way through, this video is available at a one-off price, £1 below the retail price, through *The Ecologist*.

HOW TO GET IT

To get your copy, send a cheque for £7 (UK), £8 (rest of Europe), or £9 (outside Europe) to I-Contact, c/o 76 Mina Road, Bristol BS2 9TX, payable to Lost & Found Ltd. To find out more, visit www.videonetwork.org.



Organic, natural health-care is under attack. If the current trend continues, say Helen Fullerton and Martin Walker, the world's health may soon be entirely in the pockets of the mighty pharmaceutical corporations.

Health and its maintenance, in contemporary 'developed' society, is complex. Perhaps the most important part of this complexity, however, is the ongoing conflict between individual health-care and the professional, pharmacological response to disease which has come to dominate society.

General levels of health in developed societies have steadily improved over the last hundred years, broadly because of developments in the life sciences and public health. This progress, however, seems to bear little relationship to the delivery of medicine. While scientific medicine has generated some solutions, it has also bequeathed deadly problems. Crucially, it has led to a virtual takeover of 'health-care' by pharmaceutical corporations and an acceptance that pharmaceutical medicine is primary and best. Yet the extent of the damage done by drugs is enormous. In the US in 1994, it was estimated that there were over two million severe adverse drug reactions, of which 106,000 were fatal⁽¹⁾. Similar calculations suggest that in England, adverse drug reactions are the third most common cause of death⁽²⁾.

Drug companies have always supported 'orthodox' medicine. Medicine's high-ranking professional bodies were themselves set up

with help from pharmaceutical companies, and still receive grants for running costs, hospitality, building and printing. The Royal College of GPs, for example, received £105,000 from Glaxo, Wellcome and Beecham when it was set up in the early 1950s. The Royal College of Physicians has received funding from the pharmaceutical industry, as has the Royal Society of Medicine. Given this funding, is it surprising that reports sponsored by such bodies so often lambast the use of vitamins, food supplements, nutritional and alternative medicine?

Today, however, the corporatisation of medicine is gaining speed and reaches far beyond the professional institutions of medicine.

THE MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

The Medical Research Council (MRC), a public body, is the closest thing to a national research institute in Britain. Originally independent, funded entirely by government and concerned with public health, it has veered wildly away from its original purpose. Today, while most of its £282 million a year funding is public money from the Department of Trade and Industry, the direction of its research is strongly influenced by commercial interests. From 1997 to 1998, eight

of the 16-person MRC Council declared vested interests, four of them in the largest pharmaceutical and chemical companies. The MRC's 1996 Annual Report stated that 96 industrial consultancies are held by MRC staff, and that the MRC itself holds equity in five life-science companies.

MRC earnings from collaboration with industry in 1995 and 1996 were £6.2 million. A considerable part of the MRC's work involves carrying out lucrative pharmaceutical trials for the big drug companies. For example, the 'ISIS-4' trial conducted by the Clinical Trials Unit at Oxford, supported by the MRC and the British Heart Foundation (BHF), compared the effect of traditionally used magnesium in heart attack patients with that of Capitrol, a drug produced by Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS). The results of ISIS-4 suggested that magnesium was ineffective compared with Capitrol. As a consequence of this study, NHS policy shifted away from the use of the cheap and effective magnesium and towards expensive pharmaceutical drugs.

This new clinical policy was accepted despite the fact that it was BMS which paid \$6 million for the study and the trial came under considerable critical review because of its methods; especially the use of high doses of magnesium. While collaborative projects with big drug and chemical companies earn money for the MRC, they also help the drug companies make huge profits when drugs given the MRC stamp of approval are sold to the NHS.

THE 'MOVEMENT FOR REAL DOCTORS'

In the mid-1980s, national campaigns against 'health fraud' were set up in the US, Canada and Britain. Although these organisations maintained that they were principally concerned with the delivery of 'effective health-care', in fact they constituted aggressive campaigns against the use in health-care of vitamins and food supplements, and against 'alternative' health therapies and their practitioners. In Britain, the Campaign Against Health Fraud (HealthWatch) was set up in 1987. Financed initially by medical insurance and pharmaceutical companies, HealthWatch waged an aggressive and very public campaign against alternative, complementary and natural medicines.

A number of its original members were associated with the Wellcome Foundation drug company and its charitable arm the Wellcome Trust. The inauguration of the campaign in the US and Canada, as well as in Britain, began with the licensing and testing of Wellcome's anti-AIDS drug AZT. The marketing of AZT set a new gold standard for aggressive, covert drug marketing strategies. Every possible influence was used to sell AZT, nationally and internationally both to governments and direct to consumers. Five out of the 25 members of the Medicines Commission which eventually licensed AZT in Britain had connections with Wellcome.

Following the licensing, Wellcome placed money and representatives wherever they could sway opinions. A year after the drug had been licensed, Wellcome gave £10,000 to the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS, the gatekeeper for information on

AIDS treatments in the House of Commons. Representatives of Wellcome's PR firms were placed on committees which allocated AIDS funding; the funding went only to groups that were uncritical of AZT. In a move deliberately intended to promote AZT among GPs, Wellcome granted £144,000 to an AIDS foundation set up by the British Medical Association (BMA). Between 1987 and 1993, when the 'Concorde' trials helped hammer several nails into AZT's coffin by demonstrating that it actually *worsened* the health of asymptomatic individuals who had tested HIV positive, the drug earned over £200million for Wellcome.

Contrast this with the case of germanium. In 1988, a highly-qualified bio-science researcher, Dr Sandra Goodman, compiled a literature review of organic germanium. Discovering that researchers from the 1920s onwards had investigated its anti-viral properties, and believing that the substance might help people who tested HIV positive, Dr Goodman pressed the MRC to carry out trials. Despite sending papers to all the relevant committees, meeting with scientists, doctors and politicians, Goodman got nowhere.

Soon after Goodman began to press for the testing of germanium, items began to appear in the media about its dangers to health. The

hardest-hitting article⁽³⁾ carried quotes from Professor Vincent Marks, a founding member of HealthWatch. Marks' department at Surrey University was in receipt of half a million pounds' funding from the Wellcome Foundation, some for HIV-related work. Marks called germanium 'a worthless and dangerous poison', and said that 'they [germanium, cadmium and other natural drugs] were killing people by the thousands from kidney failure'. Not long after this article appeared, germanium was banned from sale by the UK Department of Health.


Dr Goodman wrote to the Japanese researchers whom Marks had quoted as reporting kidney damage due to germanium. She found that these researchers had been referring to germanium sesquioxide,

a mineral form of germanium. In their return letter, the scientists told her that in recent research they had found organic germanium to be completely non-toxic.

SUPPLEMENT WARS

Pharmaceutical interests have battled fiercely for the last 20 years to restrict the public's use of vitamin and mineral supplements which pose a threat to their patented, chemical stranglehold on the medicines market. As with the 'Health Fraud' episodes, they have employed various strategies. They have claimed that vitamins and food supplements are hazardous to health; that there is no nutritional need for them; and that the public has to be protected against 'quacks' who peddle them. In their battle against natural remedies, corporations have succeeded in enshrining in law the principle that nutritional supplements cannot be associated with claims for better health. Finally they have tried to squeeze supplements out of the market by harmonising international trade regulations.

Controlling regulations is the key to killing off natural medicines, and the battle to rationalise them continues. In the UK, a government



In their battle against natural remedies, corporations have succeeded in enshrining in law the principle that nutritional supplements cannot be associated with claims for better health. Finally they have tried to squeeze supplements out of the market by harmonising international trade regulations.



working group on Dietary Supplements and Health Foods, set up in response to 'concern about the potential hazards of dietary supplements'⁽⁴⁾, produced a highly flawed report which was later used by the EU Commission to prepare a 1992 draft Directive on dietary supplements.

The EU draft Directive ruled that dietary supplements should only be available on the basis of 'nutritional need'. In Britain, outraged nutritional therapists, organised by Linda Lazarides of the Society for the Promotion of Nutritional Therapies warned that dietary supplements could be swept off the shelves entirely. An unprecedented public campaign to stop the Directive so shook the Council of Ministers that they decided to restrict community legislation 'to what was strictly needed, and apply where necessary the principle of mutual recognition'. In March 1993, the Commission announced that there was no need for Community Legislation on dietary supplements⁽⁵⁾. During the late 1980s, and throughout the 1990s, there were continuous and well-publicised attacks on vitamins and food supplements. In July 1996, acting on the advice of two of its advisory committees, the UK government announced its intention to restrict the free availability of Vitamin B6 to 10mg. The advisers had said that higher levels of B6 could lead to sensory neuropathy (tingling and numbness in the extremities, and disorientation). The 10mg figure was based on an incorrect toxicological extrapolation from animal experimentation, and a biased citation of one study rejected as fraud by all nutritional scientists⁽⁶⁾. In April 1998 the US National Academy of Sciences reviewed B6, and reported 'no observed adverse effect level', even after prolonged intake of 300mg per day⁽⁷⁾. Levels of 25-200mg per day are commonly taken by those deficient in functional B6. In July 1998, the government gave in to protests, and the legislation was reluctantly deferred 'until a new expert group on vitamins and minerals had reported'.

PLAYING WITH WORDS

The next trick was the best. The pharmaceutical industry and its allies came up with what they thought was a surefire way of banishing natural remedies from the shelves by reclassifying them as medicines. While classified as 'food supplements', they could be sold relatively freely, but as 'medicines', they would need a product licence – 'market authorisation' in Europeak. Such a licence could only be obtained on proof not only of 'safety and quality', but of 'efficacy', a qualification usually 'proved' by animal experimentation, and expensive clinical trials.

Unchecked, this strategy would have meant the end of natural remedies. Apart from trial costs, a licence itself would cost upwards of £80,000 a product. Reclassifying supplements as medicines was the

policy of the US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) in the 1980s. FDA officers – often with guns – would raid clinics looking for 'illegal' Vitamin B⁽⁸⁾. But an outraged public, almost 50 per cent of whom took supplements, forced a change in the law. In 1994 Congress passed The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, which guaranteed free availability of supplements and information as to their function. In Canada, at this time, doctors were struck off simply for prescribing vitamins. Manufacturers were charged exorbitant Drug Identification Number (DIN) fees when they made low-key health claims for products like fish oil. The government's regulatory body reclassified 167 remedies, including feverfew and ginger, as 'medicines'⁽⁹⁾. As in the US, though, angry citizens raised an outcry, forcing the Health Minister to scrap the DIN fees and declassify food supplements.

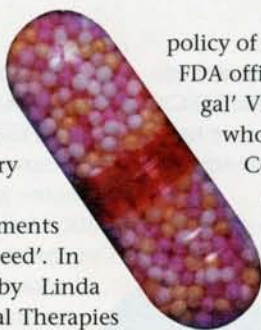
The most devastating weapon in the hands of the pharmaceutical industry in Europe has been Article 1 of the 65/65 EU Directive of 1965, which defined a product as a 'medicine' if it was used 'to treat or prevent a disease ... or if it makes medical diagnosis, or ... restores, corrects or modifies a physiological function in human beings ... or in animals'. On these criteria, every food supplement is medicinal, even if no claims are made for it. In 1994, the UK government implemented the Directive using two statutory instruments which were passed without debate.

It was only with the publication of the MCA guidelines (MAL8) that implications were spelt out and massive public protest forced the MCA to back down. In 1998, following the government climbdown over B6 the UK Medicine Control Agency sprung a consultation letter on the health food industry, laying out new procedures whereby the MCA would have sole authority to decide whether a product was a medicine. The document gave the health food industry just one month to respond. The changes were to be brought in on April 1st 1999. Under the proposed regulations, the MCA was to have powers to enter premises with the police, remove 'illegal' natural products, and prosecute anyone selling them.

Yet again, however, public protests forced the government to compromise and give reassurances that, 'the proposals would not change the status of products which are correctly classified now as nutritional supplements and the exemptions for herbal remedies would similarly remain intact'⁽¹⁰⁾. But what was meant by the term 'correctly classified'?

HARM - ONLY?

The international 'harmonisation' of medicines is a major part of the strategy to squeeze out non-corporate health-care solutions. The main international instrument of market-fixing is the 'Codex Alimentarius', which is empowered by the World Health



Health In History

There have been three key historical factors in the transformation of health-care into a corporate monopoly: the professionalisation of doctors, beginning with the Medical Act of 1858⁽¹⁾; the development of industrial drug production, which began in earnest in the 1920s⁽²⁾; and the unaccountable development of medical science and technology, which advanced quickly in the mid-nineteenth century, when medicine became increasingly centred on the laboratory⁽³⁾. For the individual, this process has had disastrous results. Today, not only are individuals not in charge of their own health but their physicians too are also losing control. In the 21st century, what you consume, what your body is, how it is treated and how it succumbs to or conquers illness, could be out of your hands, controlled by a new, commercially oriented 'sci-med' class.

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Organisation (WHO) to set international standards for drugs, food, pesticides and dietary supplements; 'to guide the world's growing food industry and to protect the health of consumers'. Codex has a membership of 146 countries, each of which has one vote. Various organisations are allowed to attend meetings, but over 90 per cent of these are multinational corporations. Following lobbying from the multinationals, no state can set higher standards for its own health, environmental protection or consumer freedom than those set by Codex. Any nation setting its own standards could be heavily fined by the WTO. In 1996, Codex met in Bonn to formulate radical changes in the rules that govern dietary supplements. The German delegation had drafted a proposal sponsored by the drug company Hoechst, Bayer and BASF arguing that no herb, vitamin or mineral should be sold for prophylactic or therapeutic reasons and that supplements should be reclassified as drugs. They wanted these regulations to be binding throughout the WTO. The proposals were provisionally accepted on a vote of 16 to two, but later complaints and protests halted their implementation.

THE END OF HEALTH FOODS?

Throughout the 1990s, drug companies forced to accept that supplements and herbs were not going to be simply swept out of the market embarked upon two new stratagems. First, they took over small firms, so that they could incorporate the natural remedies into their pharmaceutical product marketing. Second, many companies merged with the food manufacturers who were incorporating vitamins and minerals into processed foods. If food supplements were put into foods, this would head off the demand for their separate, clinical use and leave the market clear for drugs.

A good example of a vitamin and supplement company 'changing sides' is that of Solgar. In 1999, the company was bought by American Home Products, one of the world's biggest pharmaceutical companies. This means that a previously independent provider of high-quality supplements has now become part of the vicious circle which affects contemporary health in Europe and America. While one arm of a multinational produces health-eroding chemicals, another arm holds out pharmaceuticals and food supplements to help ameliorate the damage.

The most lucrative expansion of pharmaceutical companies, however, is into fortified and functional foods – known as 'nutraceuticals'. Nutraceutical foods claim health benefits by virtue of their added vitamin, mineral or herbal constituents. These products are advertised as containing anthocyanins as antioxidants, phytoestrogens to protect the heart, and sterols to block cholesterol uptake. In this way, high-sugar low-nutritional junk foods are dressed up as healthy.

It is ironic that the 'health claims' issue fought out over the last half-century, against small supplement companies, could finally be settled by multinational food companies, using the rationale of free trade to swamp the EU markets with fortified and functional foods. It would be typical of the ongoing trend towards the corporatisation of human health-care.



If health and healing are to be returned to the community, they have to be decorporatised, and we have to begin again from the base of the community, building health centres in which the local population can participate and where prevention is the first principle.

THE LOCAL ALTERNATIVE

The most progressive practitioners and researchers in the NHS are presently trying to rationalise health-care, by looking in detail at the effectivity of treatments. The motivation for this rationalisation is, however, the serious fiscal crisis in the health care system. While this approach will undoubtedly lead to the end of unnecessary or unevidenced procedures and a regularisation of best clinical practice, such an approach does not begin to tackle the influence of corporate capitalism in health care. The institutions of medical practice in Britain have fought an unrelenting battle against alternative practitioners of all kinds. Instead of joining forces with the best of these traditions, orthodox medical practitioners have either ignored them or denounced their practitioners as quacks. Meanwhile the real enemy of the people and their health care, industrial science and its vested interests, has crept up and then overtaken the healing physician. If health and healing are to be returned to

the community, they have to be decorporatised, and we have to begin again from the base of the community, building health centres in which the local population can participate and where prevention is the first principle. In a post-industrial age our everyday lives are radically affected by multinational companies and our health affected by their products. If we desire autonomy and control over our own bodies, we have to a great extent to resist multinational organisations and the governments which front for them. ♦

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Helen Fullerton is an independent researcher mainly in trace element and vitamin nutrition, and their contribution to immune responses in humans and animals particularly with respect to current problems such as BSE, bovine TB, chronic organophosphate poisoning, and multiple chemical sensitivity. She has been a lecturer in agricultural chemistry, at Glasgow University, and learned homeopathy when livestock farming.

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THE MEME MACHINE

KALLE LASN THINKS WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF A GREAT GLOBAL MINDSHIFT.

WHEN I SHOWED up in Seattle last November to watch the WTO circus unfold, I wasn't expecting much from the protesters. I thought they would be the usual rabble-rousing lefty crowd, charged up but not particularly focused, thoughtful or effective.

But as the waves of protesters moved through the downtown core, I changed my mind. These people were passionate, they were having fun, and the signs they carried were sharper than anything I could have thought up. One big placard simply said 'WTO' – except the letters were corporate logos (the golden arches upside down for 'W', the Texaco 'T' and the 'O'-shaped eye of CBS). It became clear that most of the protesters understood what was fundamentally at stake and what the summit really boiled down to: civic culture vs corporate culture. More than that, they had found a way to distil this message into potent 'memes'. It's with memes, not bombs, bullets or tear gas, that the real geopolitical battle of the next century will be fought; and with ground troops like those folks in Seattle, 'the people' may just win.

A meme (rhymes with 'dream') is a unit of information – a catchphrase, a concept, a tune, a notion of fashion, philosophy or politics. Memes compete with one another and are passed through a population in much the same way as genes pass through a species. Good strong memes can change minds, alter behaviour, catalyse collective mindshifts and transform cultures. In our information age, whoever has the memes has the power.

For about forty years corporations have had the power. They've been beaming their memes into our brains at the rate of about 3,000 marketing messages per day (that includes all the ads, brands and logos you see and hear on TV, on computer screens, magazines, radio, billboards, buildings, T-shirts, appliances, etc). This onslaught – arguably the biggest psychological experiment ever carried out on the human race – has changed us profoundly. The food we eat, the cars we drive, the way we feel about our bodies, our sexuality, what music we think is 'cool', have all been shaped by the billions of pro-consumption memes dumped into our collective subconscious daily.

But lately, counter-memes – of the sort seen in Seattle – have appeared more frequently in the mindscape: fashion billboards 'liberated' by creative editors with spraycans; 'No Shop' days; a bumper sticker that asks: 'Is Economic Progress Killing the Planet?'

I believe the next few years will see an intensification of meme warfare throughout our mental environment. Which is to say, not



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in the sky or on the streets, and not in the forests, as in earlier eras, but in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, on TV and in cyberspace. This global guerrilla information war will be a no-holds-barred propaganda battle of competing world views and alternative visions of the future.

The most critical areas of contest will involve the sovereignty of individual citizens and of nations against the sovereignty of corporations. Here are what I find to be the three most potent 'metamemes' currently in the social activist's arsenal.

METAMEME 1: NO CORPORATE 'I'

'Corporations are not "persons" with constitutional rights and freedoms of their own, but legal fictions that we created and must control.'

Are corporations legitimate agents of progress or merely generators of shareholder profit at the planet's expense? Should transnationals have the power to challenge the laws of sovereign nations? In this century, will a handful of giant corporations dominate every industry? Will corporations rule the world? Or is this just a clever lefty pseudo-meme? That's the mind-field we must negotiate.

Now, if my reading of the 'Seattle Rebellion' is correct, the next 10 years will be a period of intense corporate-bashing. Corporate criminals like Philip Morris will be pushed to the wall and beyond. Aggressive megacorps like Monsanto, which thinks it can 'SLAPP' (prevent criticism via libel laws) the world into its agenda will suffer. All upcoming MAI or WTO trade initiatives are doomed. A visceral and intensely political and internet-centred reaction against corporate bigness is under way.

At stake is the very legitimacy of corporations, their 'personhood' under the law. If enough people pick up on the No Corporate 'I' meme and start relating to corporations in new, more rambunctious ways, then our business culture will change profoundly.

For one, there will be harsh, new corporate criminal liability laws. Corporate lawbreakers will not be allowed to bid for government contracts or hold television broadcast licences; they will be barred from lobbying activities and financing political campaigns. Companies that dump toxic wastes, damage watersheds, fix prices, exploit employees, or keep vital information secret from customers, will pay huge penalties. Rogue corporations that wilfully break the law will have their charters revoked, their assets sold and the money funnelled into superfunds for their victims.

STEVE CARROLL

TITLE: THEARTARCHIVE

Rules of incorporation will be rewritten so that shareholders assume partial liability for the companies they own. They will reap the rewards when the going is good, but they will share the responsibility when the company they own becomes criminally liable.

This one simple mindshift in the way we think about shareholders will transform stock markets. Fewer shares will be traded. Instead of simply choosing the biggest cash cows, shareholders will carefully investigate the backgrounds of the companies they are about to sink their money into. They'll buy into resource companies with good environmental records. They'll stay away from multinationals that use child workers or break labour laws overseas. In other words, shareholders will be 'grounded' – forced to take responsibility. Stock markets will cease to be gambling casinos. Our whole business culture will heave.

METAMEME 2: MEDIA CARTA

'Every human being has the "right to communicate" – to receive and impart information through any medium.'

In 1995, Adbusters Media Foundation (the non-profit organisation I co-founded) launched a legal action against the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) for refusing to sell us airtime for our social marketing TV messages (see *Adbusters TV Slots*, video review, page 54). The case wound its way through the courts until the Supreme Court of Canada threw it out in 1998. We are now trying to take the case to the World Court, or the UN Commission on Human Rights, under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which says, in part: 'Everyone has the right... to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any medium regardless of frontiers'.

Earlier eras had their critical human rights battles. In our information age, we have to fight for a new human right – one many of us assumed we already had – the right to communicate. We must fight for potent, practical mechanisms for citizen access to the airwaves. I like the idea of a 'Two-minute Media Revolution' in which government regulatory bodies who grant broadcast licences are obliged to give two minutes out of every broadcast hour back to the people for citizen use (the 15-, 30- and 60-second messages would be chosen on a first-come first-served basis from among those who wish to speak).

Antitrust lawsuits can also be an effective way to break up media megacorporations. If enough fed-up citizens demanded a freer, more diverse cultural environment, our governments could be pressured to go after companies like AOL Time Warner, News Corporation and Disney and limit the number of TV stations, newspapers and radio stations each is allowed to own. The ultimate goal, of course, is to break the commercial monopoly of TV and create a free marketplace of ideas where competing memes and visions of the future battle it out every night on prime time.

Media Carta is the great human rights battle of our time: a great personal, intellectual, social, cultural and legal test. At stake is our ability to create a democratic culture from the bottom up, instead of having it spoon-fed to us top-down by a corporate-owned and corporate-operated media.

METAMEME 3: THE TRUE-COST MARKETPLACE

'In the global marketplace of the future, the price of every product must tell the ecological truth.'

Progressive economists and the activist left continue to push for various 'eco' and 'carbon' taxes that would punish polluters by hitting them in the wallet. In my opinion, this approach is shortsighted. I say, let's have an across-the-board pricing system that tells the ecological truth and let the marketplace sort things out.

Take the car. More than any other product, it stands as a symbol of the need for a true-cost marketplace, in which the price you pay reflects all the costs of production and operation. That doesn't just mean paying the manufacturing cost plus markup, plus extras. It means paying for the pollution, for building and maintaining the roads, for the medical costs of accidents and the noise and the aesthetic degradation caused by urban sprawl.

The true cost of a car must also include the real but hard-to-estimate cost to future generations of dealing with the oil depletion and climate change the car is creating today. If we add up the best available estimates, we come to a startling conclusion: the fossil-fuel-based automobile industry is being subsidised by unborn generations to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars every year. Why should our children have to pay to clean up our mess?

In the true-cost marketplace of the future, no one will prevent you from driving. You'll simply have to pay the real cost of piloting your car around. Your private automobile could cost around \$100,000. And a tankful of gas, \$250.

Moving over a 15-year period towards true-cost transportation would force us to reinvent the way we get around. Enormous public demand for monorails, bullet trains, subways and streetcars would emerge. Carmakers would design eco-friendly alternatives: vehicles that recycle their own energy, human-and-fuel-powered hybrids, lightweight solar vehicles. Citizens would demand more bike lanes, pedestrian paths and car-free downtowns. A paradigm shift in urban planning would then ensue.

I envision a global, true-cost marketplace in which the price of every product tells the ecological truth. The price of a pack of cigarettes will include the extra burden it places on our health-care

system; the price of an avocado will reflect the real cost of flying it over thousands of miles to our supermarkets; the price of nuclear energy will include the estimated cost (and risk) of storing the radioactive waste in the Earth's crust for millions of years.

True-cost is a solution that almost all political persuasions can agree with. Conservatives like the idea because it's a logical extension of their free-market philosophy. Progressives like it because it involves a radical restructuring of the status quo. Governments like it because it gives them a vital new function to fulfil: that of calculating the true-costs of products, levying ecotaxes and managing our bio-economic affairs for the long term. And environmentalists like it because it may be the only way to achieve sustainability in our lifetimes.

On a number of fronts – full-cost accounting, information rights, corporate control, sustainable consumption – I think we're on the verge of a great global mindshift – a transformation of human affairs comparable in scale to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

As we plunge into this new century, I propose a toast: Cheers! Prosit! Kanpai! Hallelujah! May the best memes win.

Kalle Lasn is editor of Adbusters magazine and author of Culture Jam – The Uncooling of America

I ENVISION A GLOBAL, TRUE-COST MARKETPLACE IN WHICH THE PRICE OF EVERY PRODUCT TELLS THE ECOLOGICAL TRUTH... THE EXTRA BURDEN IT PLACES ON OUR... SYSTEM

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

PAUL KINGSNORTH BELIEVES THE LACK OF A CLEAR ALTERNATIVE TO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY TO BE A STRENGTH, NOT A WEAKNESS.

SOMETHING IS IN the air. You can smell it in the clouds of tear gas wafting over from Seattle, and through the smoke of Monsanto crops burning in Indian fields. You can sense it in the jungles of Chiapas and on the streets of Seoul and London. You can hear it in the buzz of Internet connections and see it in the pages of the 'alternative' press. It is the smell, the sight, the sound, of assumptions changing, world views being challenged – paradigms shifting. Something is going on out there, in the first months of this century. Something big.

The world is changing, possibly faster than at any time since the Industrial Revolution. Old certainties are being swept away to make way for something none of us seem able to control. And as they are, the voices of dissent grow steadily louder as more and more people around the world begin to realise that we are being sold a dud; that the consumer monoculture we are all being railroaded into cannot deliver. As rates of economic growth increase, so do rates of deforestation, soil erosion, climate change, dispossession, poverty, inequality, cultural erosion, crime, heart disease, cancer – the list is depressingly long. Whatever you want to call it – global capitalism, the New World Order, liberal economics, the consumer democracy, the End of History – it's letting us down. And this fact is becoming increasingly difficult to sweep out of sight. The question is – what now? This basic challenge poses the single biggest obstacle to those who militate for change today. Fine, say the defenders of the status quo; you think the world isn't working.

But what's the alternative?

A hundred years ago, the answer to that question probably seemed simple. Those who opposed the dog-eat-dog world of the Global Market back then had a ready-made solution to their problems, laid out by Marx and Engels in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, later expanded by Marx in *Das Kapital*. Communism, state socialism or one of its variants provided a blueprint which anyone, anywhere, could use to build A Better World.

The statist left, which dominated the radical politics of the twentieth century, provided a ready-made intellectual framework of solutions for the dissatisfied to buy into. Hate raw capitalism? No problem – a centrally-planned economy, run by or for 'the workers' was the clear alternative. Furious about poverty? In a Marxist state, there would be no poverty. Enraged by imperialism? Under socialism, all peoples, all nations and all classes would be treated equally.



IF TODAY'S CAMPAIGNERS FOR CHANGE LEARN JUST ONE LESSON FROM TWENTIETH-CENTURY HISTORY, IT SHOULD BE THIS: BIG IDEAS ARE A BAD THING.

Some recent commentators have identified what they see as a weakness in the radical politics of today – the lack of such a Big Idea. You may complain, they say; you may grouch about globalisation, bellyache about environmental destruction, grizzle about consumer society. But unlike those radicals of a hundred years ago, you don't have a fully worked-out alternative. You don't have a Big Idea.

The thing about Big Ideas, though, is that they don't work. The Marxist Big Idea was a rigid gospel of economic rules, a one-solution-fits-all kitbag which every communist state used in very similar ways. It made no allowances for cultural, regional, political or temperamental differences. It was a top-down, unaccountable ideology, bulldozing differences, snuffing out both individuals and individuality itself, homogenising nations and peoples in the name of a theoretical greater good.

This is the tendency of all Big Ideas, be they right or left, up or down, reactionary or progressive. Fascism, communism, imperialism, theocracy – and, yes, global free trade too. They may work, for a while, but they store up a hell of a lot of problems for later, and they are generally morally revolting.

If today's campaigners for change learn just one lesson from twentieth-century history, it should be this: Big Ideas are A Bad Thing. We don't need another one, ever. We don't need any more grand schemes, manifestos, gospels. We don't need any more ideologies imposed on us from above by intellectual thugs who think they are doing it for our own good. We had a century of that, and it was a disaster. Now, we have a chance to escape from that mentality.

We have a chance to say: yes, we think we have identified the problems. But the solution is not to replace one form of economic dictatorship with another, but to take the power from the top and spread it around. To localise both economics and democracy. To put power back where it belongs – in the hands of communities, localities, people; where it can respond to everyday problems and concerns, to places and to nature, at an everyday level.

The Big Ideas of the twentieth century failed. Our task now is not to resurrect them in some new form, but to reject them altogether. Our lack of a Big Idea is not a weakness but a profound strength. The New Big Idea is that Big Ideas are dead. We should dance on their graves.

Paul Kingsnorth is deputy editor of *The Ecologist*.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

IF MPS DON'T HOLD AN INCREASINGLY PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT, WARNS TONY BENN MP, DEMOCRACY COULD SUFFER

I WAS ELECTED 50 years ago and have fought 17, and won 16 contested elections, a record equalled, I am told, only by two former prime ministers, Gladstone and Churchill. I have sat in 14 parliaments under 11 prime ministers, with eight speakers. For these reasons, I feel qualified to comment upon the work of the House of Commons today. And one comment I feel should be made, because it seems to be seldom commented upon, is this: governments do not make laws.

Standing alone, this may seem a strange statement, but I will explain my point. It is common to hear people say that the Government has decided to do this or that, for example, 'the Government is introducing means tests for disability benefits'. Yet it is not government that does these things; it is ourselves, as MPs, who do. We are the legislators. We pass the laws.

Yet, worryingly, during the time I have been an MP, great changes have occurred – at an accelerating rate over recent years – that have altered the focus of power in this country. There is a growing centralisation of power in all parties, and I believe that, without any announcement of any change being made, Britain is steadily moving from a parliamentary to a presidential system of government.

It appears to me as an observer that, increasingly, all effective power comes from the prime minister. I understand that the current prime minister has twice as many advisers as his predecessor. That is not a new development, but it is new in the sense that it is now becoming apparent to many people, certainly to me, that the real Cabinet is now 10 Downing Street and that policy announcements made have often been discussed within that Cabinet alone.

My diary from January 1968 tells me that I had eight Cabinet meetings in a month, most or many of which lasted all morning and afternoon. I understand that the Cabinet now meets for between 20 and 40 minutes. I can only conclude that the Cabinet is no longer the centre of real decision-making. I also understand that no cabinet papers have been presented by individual cabinet ministers since the election. When I was a minister, I presented many, as did other ministers, but that process has passed away without comment.

The problem with the development of this new 'presidential' system is that there are no effective checks and balances comparable to those, for example, in the United States. As we know from



IT IS BECOMING APPARENT TO MANY PEOPLE, CERTAINLY TO ME, THAT THE REAL CABINET IS NOW 10 DOWNING STREET.

recent history, an American president has to think about the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Supreme Court in making his decisions, but the 'president' of the UK does not have to think about any of those things.

So how should the House of Commons respond to this situation?

As MPs, we are carried into the House by a party at an election. We are all committed to the manifesto that brought us here. Yet we backbenchers are not required to take orders from the government when a policy has not been in the manifesto, has not been put before us, and has not been the subject of consultation.

This is extremely important, because we are also committed to the electors that we represent, the people who choose us. They employ us, they can dismiss us and we must speak for them. I have learned far more from letters from constituents, and from my surgeries – 500 or more people come to them every year – than from listening to debates in the House. They bring the real experiences of life to me.

Our duty is to speak and vote as we believe to be right, within the framework of loyalty that I have described to our party, to our constituents and to our conscience.

With the help of MPs from various parties, I recently tabled an Early Day Motion in parliament, attempting to address this issue. The preamble rehear-

ses much of what I have said, but I would like to lay out the operative passage here:

'That this House... therefore invites all... Members, while honouring their personal and political obligations and loyalty to their own party and the manifesto on which they were elected, to speak and vote more freely in the House on the proposals put before them, and by doing so to reassert their historic role as elected representatives, their right and duty to express their own deeply held convictions and their responsibility for maintaining the role of this House as a democratic legislature holding all government to account, having been elected by the people for that purpose.'

I believe that that is the responsibility of all MPs, whichever party we belong to, to hold governments to account, on behalf of the people. I also believe passionately that the new tendency towards centralisation should not obliterate the very thing of which we boast most proudly: our democracy.

Tony Benn is the Labour MP for Chesterfield.

FIDDLING WHILE THE CLIMATE BURNS

PETER BUNYARD EXAMINES THE LATEST EVIDENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

A REPORT FROM the UK Met Office, which largely vindicates what some called an 'alarmist' issue of *The Ecologist* on climate change, warns of severe weather effects to come. But it does not go far enough.

WITH JUST WEEKS to go before the new century, the catastrophic rains that swept as many as 20,000 to their deaths in Venezuela, and the 200km-per-hour winds that battered France could not have done more to bring the message home that nowhere in the world is safe from the impact of climate change. Now, to add weight to what is routinely referred to as 'anecdotal' evidence, the UK Meteorological (Met) Office has come out with an updated report: *Climate Change and its Impacts: Stabilisation of CO₂ in the Atmosphere*. It is a significant piece of work, but one which has to be read between the lines to get its full import.

We now emit some 7.5 billion tonnes of carbon a year into the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels and forest destruction, and emissions have been rising as countries get drawn into the global economy. According to the Met Office's calculations, we could stabilise carbon dioxide levels 120 years from now if we kept growth in emissions down so that they peaked at 9 billion tonnes per year some 50 years hence and then gradually declined to 2.5 billion tonnes by the year 2250 – at 550 parts per million (ppm) in the atmosphere. The assumption behind this projection is that we will find alternatives to fossil fuels over the new century. A more pessimistic projection is that carbon dioxide emissions will peak at 12.5 billion tonnes per year by 2075 and then decline to about 4 billion tonnes per year by 2250 – at 750 parts per million.

But can we be so sure that a final stabilisation of CO₂ in the atmosphere at 750 ppm is the worst case scenario? An even starker alternative given in the report is 'unmitigated' or 'business-as-usual' emissions, in which no steps are taken to limit greenhouse gas emissions (the graphs on the opposite page show these three projections starkly). The current trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions, should they remain unmitigated, will take us to a near fivefold increase in atmospheric carbon one century from now (to 1,300 parts per

million compared with the pre-industrial 280 ppm, and more than three times today's 365 ppm). Indeed, given basic assumptions about global economic aspirations combined with population growth, we could be doubling CO₂ emissions in the atmosphere every 27 years.

Before we dismiss as 'unbelievable' the prospect of such a horrendous increase in greenhouse gas emissions, we should look at the facts. The Italian astrophysicist, Alberto di Fazio, at his Global Dynamics Institute in Rome, has shown from current trends in the growth of CO₂ emissions that even were we able to substitute natural gas for coal-burning across the globe, and improve efficiencies of energy use by a remarkable 'close-to-the-limits' 250 per cent, a century from now we would gain

‘The US, if carbon trading is accepted as a legitimate mechanism, will be pushing out 10 per cent more carbon into the atmosphere over the next decade compared with 1990.’

no more than five years' grace before atmospheric carbon had reached the levels it would do under 'business-as-usual'. None of that appears in the Met Office's graphical presentation.

On the contrary, the Met Office leaves the 'business-as-usual' trend literally hanging in the air a century from now, so that we are left with the impression that to go along that trajectory is so unlikely (or that its consequences are too terrible to contemplate) that we need spend no more time on it. Instead, the validity of the Met Office's conclusions as to what we might expect of future climate depends critically on the supposed stabilisation of carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere over the next few centuries.

Yet from current trends, it looks as if the goal of stabilising atmospheric carbon dioxide at 550 ppm is a non-starter, especially when we consider the long-term marginal effect on emissions of substituting natural gas for coal and dramatically improving efficiencies. Even the 750 ppm scenario would require an aggressive turn-

around from current practice, and, with governments still wrangling over the Kyoto Protocol on 'carbon emissions trading' and 'clean development mechanisms' there is little evidence to date that greenhouse gas emissions are being curbed. The US, if carbon trading is accepted as a legitimate mechanism, will be pushing out 10 per cent more carbon into the atmosphere over the next decade compared with 1990, while China alone will be burning more coal in 10 years' time than all the OECD countries put together, and that includes the US, Europe, Japan. Add in the remorseless spread of consumerism across the globe and we have a recipe for runaway global warming.

There is more. The unpalatable truth is that we are destroying the world's forests well ahead of the impact of future climate change. The destruction of tropical forests, in particular through burning, is having a significant effect on the transfer of energy from the tropics to the higher latitudes. The Amazon rainforest is responsible for pumping back into the atmosphere as much as half of the 12 million million tonnes of water that falls as rain. With the forests gone, 20 per cent less water vapour gets back into the atmosphere; a loss in energy terms equivalent to more than 20 times the total energy used by humanity. By destroying the forests we could be throwing a switch on climate which could result in dramatic changes to weather systems, including the unleashing of a spate of powerful El Niños. None of this prospect is even hinted at by the Met Office.

Andrew White and Melvin Cannell of the Edinburgh-based Institute of Terrestrial Ecology have created a computer model which shows that unmitigated 'business-as-usual' emissions will cause a global vegetation 'dieback' over 4 million square kilometres – approximately the size of Brazil's Amazon region and 20 times the size of the UK – within a century. Stabilisation of atmospheric CO₂ at 750 ppm leads ultimately to vegetation losses of 3 million square kilometres; stabilisation at 550 ppm to losses of one million square kilometres. As vegetation is lost through global warming, so too is the 'carbon sink' which currently takes up approximately 25 per cent of human-caused carbon emissions. Since the dieback of vegetation

is exacerbated by global warming, which itself results from an ever-greater proportion of CO₂ remaining behind in the atmosphere, we have here a classic self-accentuating feedback. In essence, the worse the situation, the worse it becomes.

Of prime concern must be the impact of global warming on agriculture. As we would expect, the Met Office models show us that unmitigated carbon emissions seriously threaten agriculture across a broad swathe of the tropics, from South America, across Central Africa to India and South-East Asia. Stabilisation at 550 ppm leads to marginally better results, but the surprise is the conspicuous improvement in tropical yields under conditions which lead to 750 ppm. Yet to suggest an improvement in crop yields of 5 per cent right across South America is surely a nonsense. We know that most of the soils across the 5 million square kilometres of the Brazilian Amazon are washed out and grossly deficient in nutrients for sustaining productive agriculture.

For all such criticisms, the Met Office's report is a step in the right direction. But we are still left with the suspicion that essential feedbacks – such as the impact of forest destruction on climate – are being left out of the equation. And because the results are so broad-brush in terms of average temperature rises, or changes in precipitation, we have no idea of the potential for damage caused by extreme events, such as the winds that blew over France in late 1999, or the floods that hit Venezuela. It might look on paper as if global warming will give the US and Britain just the right climate for a productive agriculture, but what if the rains fall in the wrong season, or crops get hit by a succession of searing heatwaves just when they are most vulnerable? In the UK, for example, we can expect 10 times more summer heatwaves by the middle of the next century compared with now.

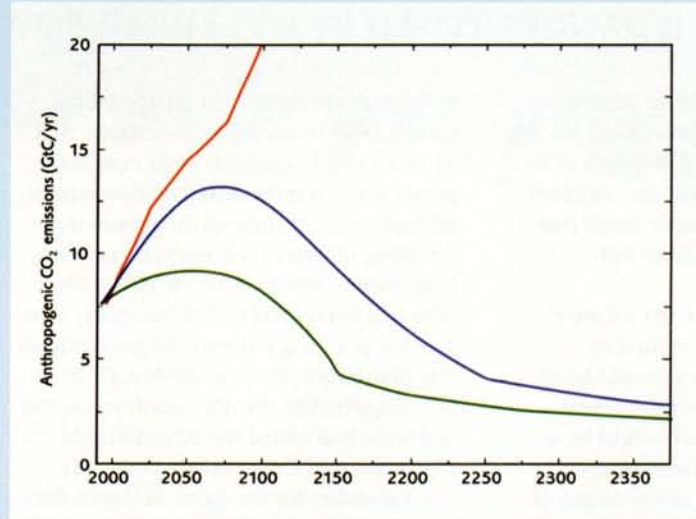
But the key problem is that this report does not give us the sense of urgency that we must do everything in our power now to implement policies and practices that lead overall to the best scenario. It is now eight years since the Framework Climate Convention in Rio. We have little time left, and that means 'crash' programmes to improve efficiencies, to get renewable energy sources off the ground, to save and regenerate forests, to curb traffic and change patterns of wasteful consumerism and trade. The warnings are there in valuable scientific studies such as this is, for all its flaws. But still we fiddle on.

Peter Bunyard is co-founder and science editor of *The Ecologist*.

FUTURE IMPERFECT?

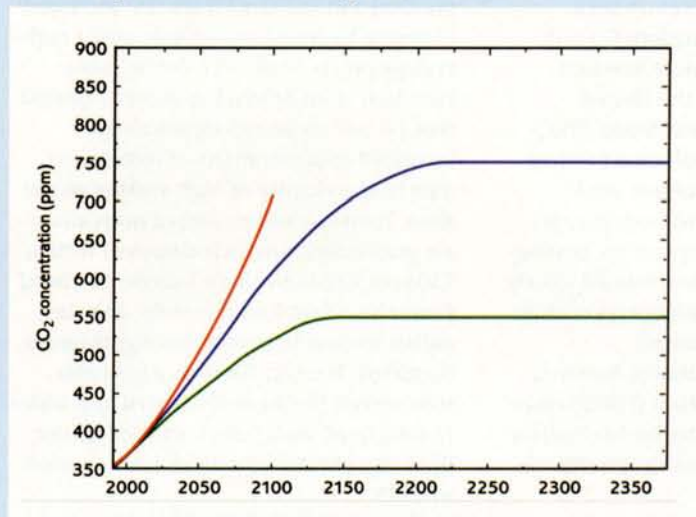
THE FOLLOWING GRAPHS, REPRODUCED FROM THE UK MET OFFICE REPORT, SHOW THE EFFECTS OF VARIOUS LEVELS OF CO₂ ON THE GLOBAL CLIMATE.

FIGURE 1: Future anthropogenic emissions of CO₂



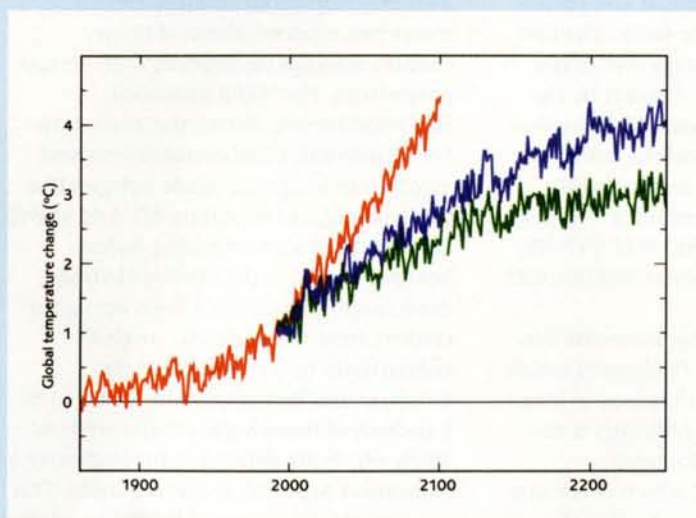
The profile of future anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide for the business-as-usual case (red), and those which would lead to stabilisation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere at 750 ppm (blue) and 550 ppm (green). Note that there is a wide variety of emissions profiles leading to stabilising: the latter two are those presented by IPCC in their 1995 report.

FIGURE 2: CO₂ concentrations resulting from emissions



The carbon dioxide concentrations resulting from emissions shown above, stabilising at 750 ppm (blue), and 550 ppm (green), compared with those from 'business-as-usual' (red).

FIGURE 3: Global temperature change



The global average temperature resulting from the unmitigated emissions scenario (red), an emission scenario which stabilises CO₂ concentrations at 750 ppm (blue), and 550 ppm (green).

AND THE DANGERS PYLON

CHRIS BUSBY INVESTIGATES THE LATEST INDUSTRY COVER-UP OF THE CANCER DANGER POSED BY OVERHEAD POWER LINES.

TWO RECENT STUDIES on the potential health effects of overhead pylons reached two very different conclusions. Thanks to the efforts of Sir Richard Doll and the 'cancer industry', the public received just one of the messages: 'power lines are safe'. This is far from the whole truth.

WE LEARNED RECENTLY from a Cancer Research Campaign press release in January this year that there would be no need for that organisation by the year 2050, since by then 'cancer would be a treatable disease, like diabetes is now'. Predictably, the question of the origin of the disease was not even discussed.

In the case of childhood cancer, however, this crucial issue has recently been addressed. The United Kingdom Co-ordinating Committee on Cancer Research (UKCCCR) has organised the United Kingdom Childhood Cancer Study (UKCCS). Since 1992, it has collected information on all children with cancer (and suitable control children without cancer) throughout the UK. The operation, costing at least £11million, has been funded jointly by (they say) 'the UK's leading cancer charities, government and industry'.

'Government' here includes the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) while the term 'Industry' includes British Nuclear Fuels, Scottish Nuclear, and the electricity companies.

The study investigates five possible causes of childhood cancer, of which the first two are ionising radiation and power-frequency electromagnetic fields. The first results, which emerged at the end of last year, related to the latter. A report in *The Lancet* was entitled 'Exposure to power-frequency magnetic fields and the risk of childhood cancer'⁽¹⁾. But an hysterical UKCCCR press release concluded – MAJOR STUDY FINDS NO LINK BETWEEN OVERHEAD POWER CABLES AND CHILDHOOD CANCER.

The conclusions sold to the media this way were simply wrong. *The Lancet's* article was solely about children exposed to magnetic fields in the home. Although it suffered from many methodological problems, the only result which threw any light upon the effect of overhead high-

voltage power cables was an admission, tucked away in an incomplete table, that 31 cases and 17 controls lived near such power lines. If representative, this suggested that children suffered an approximate doubling of cancer risk near power lines. Many senior researchers, including those who had been involved in the study, were furious, pointing out that the press release was inaccurate. The lead author, Dr Nick Day, admitted at the press conference that someone had added the misleading heading to the previously agreed body text.

The reason for the panic and spin-doctoring lay in another research paper in the *International Journal of Radiation Biology*, published in the same week. In 'Increased exposure to pollutant aerosols under high-voltage power lines'⁽²⁾ Professor Denis Henshaw from Bristol University reported that he had measured significantly increased concentrations of radioactive dust in the vicinity of high-voltage power lines. Henshaw's team placed polycarbonate plastic alpha-particle detectors within 250m of 132-kilovolt-and-above overhead power lines and found that the ionising radiation dose to people was significantly increased. Here, at last, was a plausible mechanism for the well-attested and widely confirmed association between power lines and childhood cancer, first reported in 1979.

It is not only alpha-particle-emitting dust that is concentrated. Some years ago, Anthony Hopwood, an independent researcher, reported elevated Geiger counter readings underneath high voltage power lines. The NRPB dismissed Hopwood's result. But all the dust in the UK is radioactive and contains beta and gamma-emitting man-made isotopes like caesium-137 and strontium-90. And as well as the natural alpha-emitting Radon isotopes, found in the dust by Henshaw, there is also plutonium, blown across the country from the Irish Sea. Levels of radioactivity in dust near Reading, Newbury and Basingstoke are found to be hundreds of times higher than threshold levels which are defined in the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 as nuclear waste. This is a plausible explanation for the leukaemia

and other cancers near the power lines, and indeed elsewhere. And this is why the UKCCCR and the electricity industry had to move swiftly to destroy Henshaw's credibility.

Despite being challenged at their press conference, the UKCCCR line was swallowed whole. Power lines were reported safe by the media. Fergus Walsh, BBC Health Correspondent, dutifully relayed this falsehood on the national TV news, quoting Sir Richard Doll, chairman of the UKCCCR enquiry. When I phoned Walsh after the programme and explained that the study had not even considered high-voltage power-line electric fields he did not seem to understand that there was a difference between electric and magnetic fields. And when eventually he realised the nature of the complaint, his defence fell back on the eminence of the good Sir Richard.

In essence, this is a simple affair. A doubtful epidemiological study apparently found no link between childhood cancer and magnetic fields in the home. Another quite precise set of measurements found that high-voltage power lines concentrated radioactive dust and other cancer-causing substances. Someone moved rapidly to control the news, and to declare the power lines safe.

Who stood to gain? Both the nuclear industry and the electricity industry have something to hide. But perhaps this will prove to be a deception too far. This is not the usual sleight of hand, but rather a gross and silly alteration of the conclusions of a research report. The authors should not be difficult to find. And when they are, the 'eminent' Sir Richard Doll, the man who insists against all available evidence that power lines are 'safe', cannot be standing too far away.

Dr Chris Busby is Scientific Director of the independent research group Green Audit and is adviser to the Low Level Radiation Campaign.

Further Reading

- 1 UKCCCR Investigators (1999), *The Lancet* 354, 9194.
- 2 Fews, AP, Henshaw, DL, Keitch, PA, Close, JJ and Wilding, RJ (1999), *Int J Rad Bio* 75 (12) 1505-1521.

GM THROUGH THE BACK DOOR

NICK ATKINSON AND MARK LYNAS ON THE BIOTECH INDUSTRY'S NEW TRICK – SLIPPING GM PRODUCTS INTO THE HUMAN FOOD CHAIN VIA ANIMAL FEED.

DESPITE FALLING CONSUMER demand for GM crops worldwide, GM foods are still making their way into human diets, largely through genetically-modified maize and soya animal feeds. But as activists alert consumers to this issue, all that could change.

READ ANY OF the press in the UK these days, and you'd think the biotech battle had been won. All of Britain's major supermarkets have taken genetically modified (GM) ingredients out of their own brands, investors like Deutsche Bank are warning the corporations to rid themselves of their embarrassing agri-biotech divisions, and even US farmers – knowing that markets for GM products in Europe and Asia are collapsing – are being forced to rethink the crops they grow.

But the real picture isn't quite so simple, nor quite so rosy from an anti-GM campaigner's point of view – not when animal feeds are taken into account. For over 50 per cent of the GM material imported into the UK each year is fed to livestock. That's a ready market for nearly 2 million tonnes of mainly US-produced GM soya and maize products, which are mostly being withdrawn from direct human consumption. So rather than contaminating bread, margarine and veggieburgers, GM ingredients are going straight into eggs, butter and beef.

The consequences for humans of eating animal products from livestock reared on a diet high in GM ingredients is as yet unknown. The industry's trade association UKASTA (United Kingdom Agricultural Supply Trade Association) tries to reassure consumers that it is 'unlikely' that intact genes would be passed on to livestock or humans through the widespread consumption of GM material. However, the industry is on shaky ground – the last time it took a risk with animal feed ingredients, the result was BSE. That particular mistake is calculated to have cost the UK £4billion, and 'new variant' CJD has now killed 43 people in Britain.

In fact, all three of the main companies supplying the UK animal feeds market are already giving evidence to the BSE inquiry. These are BOCM Pauls, Dalgety and ABN – a division of Associated British Food (ABF), which produces Allinson, Kingsmill and Sunblest breads, Ryvita, Twinings teas and Silver Spoon sugar. Although ABF 'recognises the considerable concern' felt by most of the British public over GM foods, it remains 'confident' that their continued use is entirely safe. The position of BOCM Pauls and Dalgety is broadly similar.

Pressure from consumers and activists has already begun to have an effect, however. Iceland – the frozen foods supermar-

ket chain which was first to withdraw GM soya from its products – is now sourcing its chickens from elsewhere to avoid the problem. Marks and Spencer has also followed suit, and claims to be the 'first high street retailer' to be removing GM soya and maize from all its animal feed.

Activists have also been working hard to put pressure on companies and keep the issue on the political agenda. Campaigners in Oxford targeted Tesco in November last year, offering passers-by genetically modified cooked breakfasts. None took up the offer. In December the Newcastle-based anti-genetics group GeneNo! visited a cattle feed mill in County Durham.

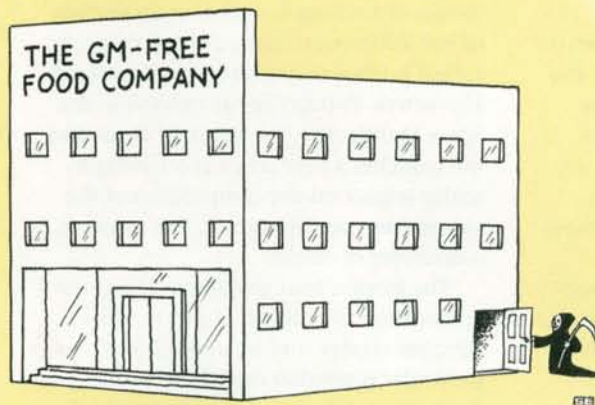
Three people dressed as cows scaled two

large grain silos and suspended a banner reading 'No GM Animal Feeds'. Now Greenpeace is campaigning on an international scale to pressurise animal feeds companies and retailers to give GM-free guarantees – focusing particularly on McDonald's, whose poultry suppliers use large amounts of US-originated GM soya. Greenpeace regards animal feeds as a commercial 'back door', through which supplies of GM soya and maize are still flooding into Europe. How quickly this door can be closed depends on the determination of consumers and activists to follow through on the major successes already achieved by the anti-GM campaign. These successes are now beginning to rebound on the US itself, as the public debate about genetic engineering, which the technology's corporate sponsors thought they had avoided four years ago, is beginning to take off.

Across Asia, the effects of the public's rejection of GM crops have been dramatic. The Japanese government is now introducing labelling laws, to come into force next year. Already, in anticipation of a tougher regime, Japanese beer producers are eliminating GM corn. In Thailand, soy sauce manu-

facturers are vying to capture the GM-free market. It's a story that – as it gets repeated globally – could sound the final death knell for this dangerous and unwanted technology. But unless GM ingredients are removed from animal feeds for good, livestock production just might be throwing a lifeline to the beleaguered biotechnology industry.

Nick Atkinson and Mark Lynas work for Corporate Watch, which has produced several briefing sheets giving more information about GM animal feeds and the companies which produce them. To receive copies please send an A4 SAE (45p postage) to Corporate Watch, 16b Cherwell St, Oxford OX4 1BG, UK or download them from www.corporatewatch.org



STAN FALES

THE SPACE RACE DISGRACE

PETER BUNYARD EXPLAINS HOW HUMAN ACTIVITIES IN SPACE ARE DAMAGING THE EARTH'S FRAGILE ATMOSPHERE.

SPACE EXPLORATION, SATELLITE

launches and the use of telecommunications could be having a devastating effect on the vital, protective properties of the outer atmosphere. Space is not as infinite – or as indestructible – as it seems, and we need to urgently rethink our activities there.

ACCORDING TO RUSSIAN academic MN Vlasov, of the Space and Ecology Centre in Moscow, not only are we leaving a mass of debris circulating at high speeds above the Earth, threatening satellites and manned spacecraft, but the exhaust gases from our space vehicles and rockets are dangerously transforming the properties of the rarified atmosphere several hundred kilometres above our heads. Add in energetic radiowaves used in telecommunication, and we have a recipe for disaster.

But should it really matter what goes on up there? As Vlasov makes clear, the outer atmosphere protects the Earth's surface from a constant bombardment of high-energy electromagnetic radiation. We are now damaging those vital outer layers, with implications for human and environmental health.

Oxygen, the by-product of life-driven photosynthesis, is one of the most important agents for protecting life on Earth from ultraviolet rays. We are now well aware of the role of ozone (O₃) in the stratosphere in protecting us from ultraviolet B, but perhaps less aware that the transformation of oxygen (O₂) into ozone is the key to protection from ultraviolet C, the most energetic and destructive of the ultraviolet.

Simply, UV-C causes a molecule of oxygen to split into two atoms, one of which reacts with O₂ to form ozone. When struck by UV-B, the ozone splits back into its

components and the cycle begins anew. Consequently, the creation and destruction of ozone absorbs ultraviolet and prevents it penetrating freely to the Earth's surface.

Ever since a British Antarctic Survey team discovered the ozone hole in 1985, we have been rightly obsessed with CFCs and the ability of these relatively stable and unreactive chemicals to pass into the stratosphere, where their breakdown in bright sunshine releases ozone-destroying chlorine. But in focusing on CFCs as a prime cause of ozone depletion in the stratosphere, we have largely forgotten exhaust from space rockets. The launch of just one rocket may release the equivalent of 1 per cent of the total hydrogen found in the outer atmosphere. Every Space Shuttle flight discharges ten or more tonnes of hydrogen, which, at an altitude of 300 kilometres, forms a cloud that can spread horizontally over several thousand kilometres. Though not as massive as the Space Shuttle, the one hundred or so satellite launches a year are clearly having a major impact on the composition of the atmosphere, and hydrogen, like chlorine, is a destroyer of ozone.

The intense heat generated during the combustion of rocket fuel also produces nitrogen oxides, and nitric oxide (NO) in particular is another catalyst in ozone destruction. Some rocket systems, like the 'Proton', release large quantities of carbon dioxide, which lasts some 60 days before it is broken down through intense electromagnetic radiation from the sun.

The overall effect is to bring about changes in the density, pressure and circulation of the upper atmosphere, which in turn will affect the dynamics of satellite orbits and the propagation of radiowaves. But the disturbances go far beyond this. As

rockets fire their way through the thin atmosphere of 'near-Earth space' they release vast amounts of heat, equivalent in their impact to an atomic bomb explosion in the lower atmosphere. Space shuttles, with their engines working while orbiting at altitudes lower than 200 kilometres, therefore pose a powerful threat to the controlled orbits of other satellites.

Debris from rocket launches and the destruction of orbiting satellites has led to thousands of tonnes of fragments, now constituting as much as 1 per cent of the total mass of the atmosphere above an altitude of 200 kilometres, travelling at high velocities, and in energy terms being equivalent to more than 3 per cent of the energy contained in the upper atmosphere. Certainly such debris threatens the safety of space shuttles and astronauts.

In essence, the 'near-Earth space' environment, with its fragile atmosphere, plays a vital role in protecting the Earth's surface and therefore ourselves from damaging radiation, including powerful ultraviolet and other high-energy electromagnetic radiation from solar flares and other cosmic events. According to Vlasov, we urgently need international regulation of the use of the near-Earth system so that it continues to protect us and future generations. With space still considered a free-for-all, especially in view of the virulent competition to extend telecommunication to every individual through global television and satellite phones, we are indeed in danger of 'blowing it'.

*MN Vlasov and his colleagues EG Slemenichs and VV Grushin have published their concerns and findings in *Cosmic Research*, (Nos 29/32/34) as well as in *Geomagnetism and Aeronomy*.*



STAN EALLES

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THE LUGANO REPORT: ON PRESERVING CAPITALISM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

with appendix and afterword by
SUSAN GEORGE

Pluto Press/£9.99 or \$14.99
ISBN 0-7453-1532-1

Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983), the US inventor, architect and writer, once noted, 'We are not going to be able to operate our Spaceship Earth successfully nor for much longer unless we see it as a whole spaceship and our fate as common. It has to be everybody or nobody.' In *The Lugano Report*, Susan George chillingly demonstrates just how wrong Fuller was.

Rather than being for 'everybody or nobody', the planet's future may instead be reserved for a self-selecting elite, the rest of us shut out if we do not serve their needs. Welcome to a world riven by a million virtual Berlin Walls.

The seeds of this potential future are with us already. Public resources, civic services, land, the atmosphere and the genetic blueprints of life are being transferred into private hands. The ongoing liberalisation of global trade and investment is enabling international investors and transnational corporations to enclose the last of the commons. Even the atmosphere, its mounting cargo of carbon dioxide threatening to overturn the climate system, is being sacrificed to the short-term profits of a runaway fossil-fuel econo-

my. Global biodiversity is dwindling at rates not seen since the last great mass extinction occurred some sixty-five million years ago.

Here, then, is the rub: even smart capitalists – those who benefit most from the current system – must now realise that things cannot go on as they are. So what is to be done? This is the question that *The Lugano Report* seeks to answer.

Consider this: 'a liberal, market-based,

'We are in a similar position to that of the Americans or the French in the mid-eighteenth century. They too were groping, not entirely sure how to get out from under an absolutist monarchy and move to a national democracy; to change their status from subjects to citizens.'

Susan George
From *THE LUGANO REPORT*

globalised world system should not merely remain the norm but triumph in the twenty-first century'. So claims a secretive and mythical (for George's book is a brilliant but deeply disturbing fact-based satire) 'Working Party' charged with the task of working out how to preserve global capi-

talism in the coming century, for the benefit of its leaders.

It is these powerful interests who commission the Working Party to identify threats to the free-market system, and to recommend measures to ensure its continuing dominance. The economic premise of their subsequent report is blunt: 'The market is the best judge of the wisdom and value of human economic activity'. The Report's authors concede, though, crucially, that 'the market cannot tell us when we may be crossing ecological thresholds until it is too late'. After detailing the human pressure on these thresholds, they focus their attention on the world's rising population, now just past the 6 billion mark, and forecast to mushroom, over the next few decades, to anywhere between 8 and 12 billion.

If world population is allowed to continually increase, claim the Report's authors, even the rich elite cocooned in the North will eventually be afflicted by ecological catastrophe and social breakdown. In that sense, Fuller was correct. The conclusion must be 'that global neo-liberalism cannot embrace everyone, not even in the most prosperous nations. It certainly cannot incorporate 6 or 8 billion people worldwide'. A more sustainable target figure would be 4 billion by 2020. The preservation of capitalism requires, therefore, that drastic global 'Population Reduction Strategies' (PRS) are instigated – immediately.

PRS will rely on judicious and – as far as



ADBUSTERS TV SLOTS

Adbusters Media Foundation, 1999.
Tel: 1 (604) 736 9401. Email: adbusters@adbusters.org

For readers who believe that too much TV is bad for your health, this may be the tonic. Adbusters TV Slots is probably the world's shortest video. Just two minutes long, it consists of three 'uncommercial' TV adverts produced by the Adbusters Media Foundation for showing on Canadian TV networks. Surprisingly, or unsurprisingly, depending on your view of the corporate media, none of them were ever screened. Not because they were of poor quality (they certainly are not) or because the Media Foundation could not pay the extortionate rates demanded by the networks. Instead, they were simply refused airtime because they have potential to upset other advertisers by challenging the very concept of conspicuous consumption and the disposable society.

Watching them, it's not hard to see why. The first ad features a giant talking pig the size of America, wallowing in overconsumption. The voiceover tells us that the average American consumes thirty times as much as the average Indian. 'American consumption is killing the planet,' it says, before urging viewers, just for one day of the year, to 'buy nothing'.

Another ad, produced specifically for last year's WTO meeting in Seattle, urges people to 'Ask our leaders The Big Question – is economic progress killing the planet?' As we know, after the Seattle 'riots' this question is, finally, starting to be asked, albeit quietly and from the sidelines.

The third ad is the simplest of all. We see a man watching TV in the average Western house. The camera moves round him to reveal a barcode imprinted on the back of his neck. 'Your living room is the factory,' says the voiceover. 'The product being produced is you.'

Something to think about next time you switch on.

Piotr Raskolnikov

possible – invisible corporate deployment of the apocalyptic horsemen: conquest, war, famine and pestilence. Consider just one example – tobacco. Promoting tobacco addiction – and associated ill-health – in expanding markets in China and other countries offers great opportunities for population reduction. More generally, ‘wherever markets are rapidly liberalised, under duress or not, a favourable terrain for increased mortality and decreased fertility is created’.

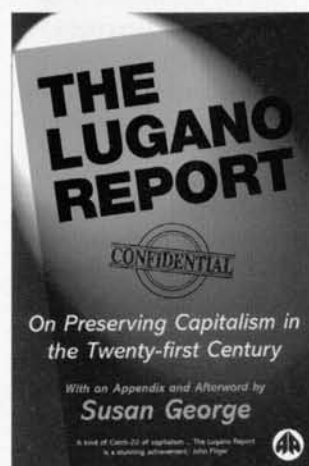
George’s mapping out of such a truly awful but horrendously plausible future is difficult to contemplate, and yet we must do so for the sake of our own survival. She

warns, ‘dispensability is moving up the social scale. It’s not just the Brazilian Indians, the American poor and other remote tribes. You, your family, your profession, your small- or

medium-sized firm, your community, your natural habitat are coming into its sights’. And she is clear about the key problem: ‘Transnational capitalism can’t stop. With transnational corporations and uninhibited financial flows it has reached a kind of malignant stage and will keep on devouring and eliminating human and natural resources even as it undermines the very body – the planet itself – upon which it depends’.

All well and good – but what is the alternative? George cogently concludes: ‘We are in a similar position to that of the Americans or the French in the mid-eighteenth century. They too were groping, not entirely sure how to get out from under an absolutist monarchy and move to a national democracy; to change their status from subjects to citizens. They didn’t have a perfect blueprint (no one ever has) and finally they had to fight’. Fight we must, for the ultimate prize is not the preservation of global capitalism, but our own humanity.

David Cromwell



PIP PIP: A SIDWAYS LOOK AT TIME

by JAY GRIFFITHS
Flamingo Books/£12.99
ISBN 0-00-257077-7

A revolutionary text is rarely readable. It might be worthy, it might make you angry, it might be a source of sound insight – but rarely will it make you giggle. Jay Griffiths’ new book – *Pip Pip, A Sideways Look at Time* – manages to be both revolutionary and readable. As well as making me angry it has also been a real pleasure to read.

Most of the people I know have been sucked into a very narrow appreciation of time. Griffiths indicates how there is just one group of people in western society which still has an ability to view time as something more complex than the linear artefact created for us. Children – the force that can humanise even the most inhuman – also have the power to ignore our ludicrous dictates as to the value of time.

And children are one of the few people who manage to resist perhaps the most odious distortion of time: the mantra that time is money. It was this equation that justified the destruction of Twyford Down by the M3 in Hampshire, England – the time of the slightly delayed motorist could be accorded a figure while the time of the walkers and kite-flyers was quite literally ‘priceless’.

One of the most fascinating insights was the nature of ‘time’s gender’. To be honest I had rarely given time much thought, apart from a general criticism as to its apparently accelerating demise around my desk. But time has far more character than just this linear evaporation that I have grown up to know. The cyclical natures of the natural world, of women, of other cultures are all at odds with the narrow definition of time as I have been used to accepting. While the building of Canary Wharf tower in London can be seen as a very masculine assertion – phallic, done the once – the work of cleaning the offices, to be carried out by poorly-paid women and always to be repeated, is more feminine in its relationship to time. And the analogy can be taken further: crops, once an integral part of the cycles of life are now threatened by our bastardisation of time; just the once will they be planted, and no seed to save.

Pip Pip would have been a great solace to those living at the road protest camps Griffiths visited. It provides a political and



tangible foundation to much of the mystical power which always seemed to imbue the less alcohol-ravaged gatherings. And while much of the

research that has created this powerful book has come from reading, the practical has been by no means ignored.

The first time I met Jay Griffiths was at the Newbury anti-road protest in Berkshire, and since then I can think of no journalist who has spent so much time up the trees and down the tunnels of protest camps around the country. She is a campaigning writer whose commitment is not to be measured in blood, mud and arrest, but in the vitality of her writing. Certainly this must become one of the principal texts of anyone campaigning for social or environmental justice.

Hugh Warwick

THE CARBON WAR: DISPATCHES FROM THE END OF THE OIL CENTURY

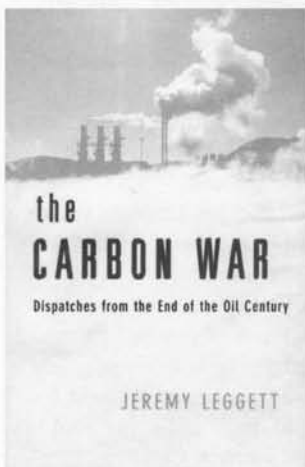
by JEREMY LEGGETT
Penguin Books, 1999/£20.00
ISBN 0-71-399360-X

In January 1991, almost seven years before the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change set an overall target for industrialised countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2 per cent, one eminent meteorologist stated, ‘It’s possible there will be unprecedented climate change’. This was not a farsighted warning from a wary or cautious academic, but a grudging statement from the most authoritative global warming sceptic of the time: Professor Richard Lindzen of MIT. Lindzen, a paid consultant for major oil and coal interests, conceded the point during a public debate with Jeremy Leggett, then the scientific director of Greenpeace International’s climate campaign. 🐦

Throughout *The Carbon War*, Leggett stokes up the evidence for a human fingerprint on global climate. Scientists at the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology prove there is only one chance in 40 that natural climate variability could explain observed warming. Studies led by the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory demonstrate that climate modelling accounting for the short-term cooling effect of sulphate aerosols reveals a clear 'greenhouse signal'.

Researchers at AT&T's Bell Laboratories report a strong correlation between global

warming and a decrease in the temperature difference between winter and summer, disproving sceptics' claims that change in solar output, rather than industrial activity,



underlies global warming. By 1995, the scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change could confidently state, 'the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate'.

But Lindzen, and a handful of other industry-sponsored renegades, continued to misrepresent the scientific consensus to the public. Consequently, the modest deal agreed at Kyoto in 1997 was almost derailed by multimillion-dollar public misinformation campaigns, corporate pocketing of politicians, vilification of IPCC scientists and plain obstructionism by a 'carbon club' of coal, oil, electricity and automobile companies – and oil-rich nations. Leggett details the machinations of this unholy alliance, expressing distaste for their 'crimes against humanity' that may have already wrecked the possibility of significantly curbing human-induced climate change. One OPEC negotiator put it bluntly: 'We don't want this convention. There's nothing in it for us'.

Such selfishness flies in the face of Nature's carbon arithmetic: if we burn just 225 billion tonnes of carbon – less than one quarter of the world's recoverable fossil fuel reserves – the resultant temperature increase

of around 1°C will be enough to endanger ecosystems and human populations. If deforestation continues at present rates, the 'carbon budget' falls to around 145 billion tonnes (according to Hare, W: *Fossil Fuels and Climate Protection: The Carbon Logic*, Greenpeace International, Amsterdam, 1997). Leggett is astonished at oil company ignorance. 'Are you sure about these figures?' exclaims BP's chief geologist. Leggett surmises: 'The most basic information on the global warming debate was not getting through'.

Why? Our education system and the media world are implicated. A thread running through the book is the media's antipathy towards presenting a sustained analysis of global warming and, especially, the attempts of business groupings such as the Global Climate Coalition to block any climate change treaty. Leggett recounts his unsuccessful attempts to interest the press in the global warming implications of a free-trade deal agreed by the G7 countries as 'aid' for Russia: 'An agency journalist from UPI, who was one of the few who phoned me and with whom I did a 30-minute interview, told me that his editor had gutted his story. They took out all the references to global warming – the editor told me it is too controversial'.

Leggett reserves much of his ire for Don Pearlman, the corporate lawyer who heads

‘We did not want to put [the oil companies] out of business, we merely wanted them to change the way they did business... We wanted them to help make the solar-energy revolution happen, not stand in its way.’

**Jeremy Leggett
From THE CARBON WAR**

the Climate Council, another carbon-fuel front. Pearlman worked with Washington law firm Patton, Boggs & Blow whose clients included Sony, American Express, the Haitian dictator Duvalier, and the Guatemalan military. Pearlman shamelessly used the Saudi and Kuwaiti delegations as climate talk proxies for the carbon industry, the Kuwaitis even submitting proposed amendments in Pearlman's handwriting.

But perhaps the most astonishing revelation is the hold that the lawyer had over US negotiators. Following talks which went

badly for Pearlman, he was observed publicly scolding Dan Reifsnyder, the head of the US negotiating team, like an 'incandescent headmaster [giving] a severe finger-lashing' to a 'recalcitrant schoolboy'.

In August 1992, Hurricane Andrew hit Florida, precipitating a record \$16.5 billion insurance bill. Noting that 'the insurance industry was bigger than the international arms trade', bigger even than the oil business, Leggett pursues a new strategy – pushing the insurance sector to back strong emission cuts. But by the time the climate talks move to Japan in 1997, Leggett accepts failure on this front: 'the most I could hope for in Kyoto was another short flying visit by a handful of insurers.' His current approach, having left Greenpeace, has been to enter the market for solar photovoltaic systems by forming his own company, Solar Century, with corporate backing.

Leggett skates over issues relating to the undemocratic power behind the World Bank, IMF and World Trade Organisation, and transnational corporations. The closest he comes to advocating structural reform of the global economy is when he says: 'we did not want to put [the oil companies] out of business, we merely wanted them to change the way they did business... We wanted them to help make the solar-energy revolution happen, not stand in its way'. Daniel Berman and John O'Connor, in their 1996 book, *Who Owns the Sun?* (obtainable through Green Books, Totnes, Devon), go further: 'To turn the tools of a solar transition over to utilities and fossil-fuel corporations, which is the present policy of [governments] and mainstream environmental organisations, is to guarantee that the coming Solar Age will arrive a century behind its time, and that it will be every bit as autocratic as today's fossil-fuel economy. We believe that a solar revolution will necessarily occur at the expense of the private energy monopolies, and that such a revolution will not take place without a passionate public fight'.

Leggett's racy dispatches over almost ten years of gruelling climate negotiations – whose outcome is still far short of stabilising atmospheric carbon dioxide levels – ought to inspire all of us to participate in this 'public fight' to move from the newly completed oil century into the brand new solar millennium.

David Cromwell

ETHICS INTO ACTION: HENRY SPIRA AND THE ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

by PETER SINGER

Rowan & Littlefield Publishers,
Inc/\$22.95

ISBN 0-8476-9073-3

One of the most beautiful scenes from the protests against the WTO in Seattle last year was the breadth of the opposition. It was in their diversity that the mass of trade unionists, animal rights activists, lumberjacks and Earth Firsters!, black and white, young and old, were so powerful. Diversity is life.

And it is that diversity and depth of anger that so characterised the life of Henry Spira. Until I met this book, *Ethics into Action*, I had never heard of this radical American activist. But Peter Singer, the philosopher who has done so much to deepen our understanding of Animal Rights, has created a biography that makes me feel sad not to have had contact with such a dynamic man during his life.

While Spira's formative work was steeped in socialism and the civil rights movement, it is for his groundbreaking elevation of animal rights campaigns from the fringe to the mainstream that he is most remembered.

The compassion that had driven Spira to fight for the rights of workers and blacks led

‘If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favour freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are people who want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.’

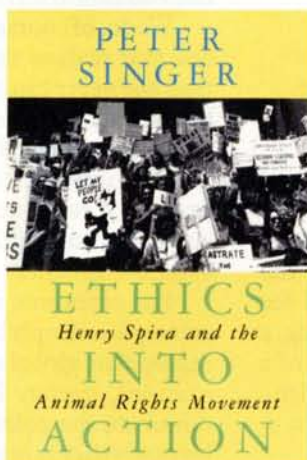
**Abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass.
From ETHICS INTO ACTION**

him, to his own initial surprise, to the cause of animals. Though there had been campaigns against vivisection for over a century, there is little evidence that any of these prevented a single experiment. But, spurred on by an early victory, Spira was to pave the way for a significant change in the number of animals killed in laboratories in the USA.

By starting with the weakest links in the

chain – barbaric experiments into the effects of brain damage on the sexual appetites of cats – Spira was able to set a precedent for success. This provided him with a momentum that carried him through some of the most powerful corporations in the world, creating change along the way.

And while he himself lived his campaign, not eating meat or wearing animal products, he did not demand victory in a single move. He was realistic enough to understand that the process needed to be done step by step,



undermining the assumed immutability of the scientific establishment, until, in the end, the suffering of animals was lessened.

This approach did not endear him to many in the movement, and while Spira

was happy to communicate with the corporations he was attacking, working with them for alternatives, other groups saw this as a weakness.

His work was not restricted to vivisection, and he also became active in the campaign against the intensive meat industry. Throughout his campaigning, Spira lived and advocated a non-violent approach to the cause. He was evidence, if more were needed, of the power of non-violence.

There is an assumption, which many people share, that ‘the individual is powerless’. This is something which Spira's life example has shattered. He is not solely responsible for the changes that have been made in our appreciation of the rights of animals but he has been an invaluable catalyst.

And Singer's book distils the essence of Spira's strategy into a neat ten-point plan. These ‘Ten Ways to Make a Difference’ provide guidance that can be applied to any struggle. They are in fact the basis for putting, as the title of the book says, ‘ethics into action’. They also characterise much of the sentiment in Seattle: global capitalism will not fall because of one huge protest, but the various pillars of the status quo will be further weakened, until the entire edifice starts to crumble.

Hugh Warwick

5 OF THE BEST

HELENA PAUL OF THE GAIA FOUNDATION RECOMMENDS FIVE BOOKS THAT GIVE THE LOWDOWN ON GENETIC ENGINEERING.

Genetic Engineering – Dream or Nightmare?: The brave new world of bad science and big business by Dr Mae-Wan Ho; Gateway Books.

Ho explains how genetic engineering, using techniques which are designed to cross species barriers, will lead to effects which we cannot possibly predict. She deals with the origins of genetic engineering technology and its application in food and medicine. She demystifies the science and criticises its reductionism. She examines the often ugly assumptions underlying current genetic engineering technology and calls for a new science which engages with wholeness and complexity.

GM Free: A shopper's guide to genetically modified food by Sue Dibb and Dr Tim Lobstein; Virgin Publishing Limited.

This is a field guide for supermarket hunter-gatherers. It begins with brief guidance to the basics of GE, the companies involved and the claims made. It looks at safety and labelling, gives contact details and policies of the main UK supermarket chains and an A-Z listing of products. Although many supermarkets have gone GE free in the UK in their own brands since this book was produced, the issues are still very much alive worldwide.

Genetic Engineering, Food, and Our Environment by Luke Anderson; Green Books.

A clear, easy to understand guide which explores the technology, the risks to human health and the environment, the way in which genetic modification is being promoted and the interests behind its introduction. The book is strong on the potential environmental impact of genetically engineered crops and its impact on farming both in the developed and developing world. Gives both basic information and explanations for the general reader and detailed references for those who want to follow up particular aspects of the GE debate.

Eat Your Genes: How genetically engineered food is entering our diet by Stephen Nottingham; Zed Books.

It examines many of the same issues as Dr Mae-Wan Ho's book, but in a less passionate style. It moves through the issue from the basic concepts through insect resistant and herbicide resistant crops to impacts on the Third World. It is very easy to quickly refer to specific issues or cases, which are described concisely. The chapter on the Third World provides useful evidence and arguments against the claim that GE will feed the world.

The Biotech Century: Harnessing the gene and remaking the world by Jeremy Rifkin; Tarcher/Putnam Books.

This looks at the social and philosophical implications of GE into the future and argues that modern biotechnology and computing are coming together to create a new scientific revolution and world-view. It warns clearly of the dangers of eugenics, showing its deep roots in US history. There is a good chapter on the flaws in risk assessment. It calls on us to pause on the threshold of unleashing this technology to ask ourselves what it will mean, warning us not to confuse creativity with the ultimate shopping trip.

THE CROW

THE CROW family: collectors of fascinating trinkets, portents of doom; symbols of spirituality, emissaries across the flood. And if THE CROW should make wing to the rooky wood, then the world will be turned on its head. To see which way the wind blows, keep your eye on THE CROW.

WEBB OF EVIL

The hell that bedevils society, believes THE CROW, can be traced to a single source: the academic teaching of institutions like the London School of Economics

Surely it is no accident that the LSE was founded very largely by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the patron saints of the Fabian Society. The Fabians are of course renowned for their promotion of large-scale, socialist, centralised planning, a gospel reducing the status of the individual citizen to that of a shopping mall customer: everything clean, neat and tidy, and the freedom of the individual to decide how he or she will live, rendered non-existent.

The Webbs travelled all over Russia as privileged guests in the heyday of the Stalinist terror, when millions were being shot and frozen to death in Siberia, or being used as slave labour on giant construction projects, or starved as a result of Stalin's forced farming collectives. On their return, they published a massive tome entitled, believe it or not, *Soviet Communism — a New Civilisation*. In hundreds of pages they endeavoured to show just how democratic centralised Soviet anarchy was supposed to be. A prominent historian at the time described it as the most monumentally useless book ever written.

Today, in quite fundamental ways, the LSE continues to run true to the form of its founding spirits. At heart the Webbs were fascists, just as are Fabians in general: indeed some may argue that the prevailing doctrines being taught at the LSE exude fascism.

Yet these founding principles are only the beginning: the school's mischief goes much deeper. Almost the first sentence any student is likely to read in one of its texts on elementary economics will reveal the school's overall philosophical stance. He or she will be informed — as though it were a natural law, rather than the product of slipshod, amoral reasoning — that the factors of production are land, labour and capital. We need to grasp precisely what is being stated here: the LSE is saying that in economics labour, human beings — creatures gifted with powers of imagination and creativity of seemingly limitless extent, people able to love, dream and inspire, able to evoke unparalleled acts of generosity, self-sacrifice and even their own deaths in the service of their fellows — are of no more account than a bag of money or a cabbage patch. Just that.

It is a statement which annihilates morality on the altars of Mammon, a statement which demeans human striving to the level of an economic calculation and opens the doors to all the social, political and environmental disasters which have been

inflicted on successive generations all over the world during the last two centuries or more.

We do, of course, need a new approach to economics, we need one that realises that human beings are not factors of production and never can be, that far from being a factor of production they are the only morally intelligible object of it, an approach which recognises that any system of teaching which denies the validity of human uniqueness is guilty of the most monstrous degrees of evil. Such denial carries with it the assumption that economic activity that ignores or rejects morality is nonetheless valid and generally acceptable.

But economic activity divorced from or opposed to moral principle is simply brigandage. However much the brigands may manipulate global markets, receive knighthoods and other decorations, operate in giant, opulent city offices and generally dominate the political and social scene, brigands they are and brigands they remain.

Today we are surrounded by portents: global warming, finite resource rapacity and excessive squandering; the elimination of a vast range of entire species of fauna and flora, all vital to ensur-

'At heart the Webbs were fascists, just as are Fabians in general: indeed some may argue that the prevailing doctrines being taught at the LSE exude fascism.'

ing the planet's otherwise self-sustaining equilibrium; the proliferation of thermonuclear, chemical and biological war weapons now able to eliminate life over large areas of the planet; these and more are portents of limitless disaster stemming from in-built economic assumptions. And these assumptions in turn emerge from the academic teaching of institutions such as the LSE.

Ultimately human societies are governed by the ideologies of those who control and manipulate their dominant institutions. It is the teaching of the London School of Economics, with its academic endorsement of the subjection of human uniqueness to economic processes, in addition to its endorsement of the ideology of greed as the motivating principle of today's society, which has brought us to our present pass.

As an institution it is evil incarnate and the continuance of its current teaching inimical to any prospect of social advance or moral progress.

The Crow is a mouthpiece for thinkers with individual and strong views. This month, the role of The Crow was taken by John Papworth.

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