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Ecologist
RETHINKING BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

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SEPTEMBER 2001

Borneo to be wild

Byers beware

One in the eye for Labour

Food for thought

Mmm... radioactive chocolate

Genoan article

What really happened in Italy

AIDAN RANKIN • DAVID EDWARDS • DEVINDER SHARMA • PAUL KINGSNORTH

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Bluff and double bluff

'There's no longer any countervailing power in Washington,' wrote Robert Reich, Clinton's labour secretary following the election of Mr Bush. 'Business is in complete control of the machinery of government.' None more so, it seems, than the oil industry, which is singularly responsible for preventing the world's worst polluter from facing up to its obligations. It was always known that Bush would toe the industry line on climate, but the justifications he has used to defend his anti-Kyoto position are extraordinary.

Following a public backlash in the US, the head of the EPA warned him that 'the issue is resonating here at home. We need to appear engaged.' On cue he commissioned the National Academy of Sciences to investigate dire warnings of the UN climate panel. The results, he said, would shape his climate policy. Confident they'd give him a big green light, he ploughed ahead with a devastatingly pro-fossil fuel energy programme. But there was no green light. Instead the NAS predicted that man-made climate change would dominate the century. But instead of adapting his policy as any honest politician would do, he adapted his message. The focus simply shifted from lack of scientific clarity to economics and the American way. 'I will not,' he said, 'accept a plan that will harm our economy and hurt American workers.'

His team put together all kinds of persuasive figures to demonstrate the impracticality of Kyoto. But they were bogus, not least because they failed to take into account the costs of climatic destruction resulting from inaction, estimated by UNEP's insurers to reach \$304 billion annually by 2050 and by one German insurance company to outstrip gross world product by the year 2065. But what contributed perhaps most to the collapse of talks in the Hague, and to America's refusal to sign up in Bonn along with 186 other countries, was Bush's insistence that the South be committed immediately to reducing their own emissions. 'I oppose Kyoto,' he explained, 'because it exempts 80 per cent of the world.'

It's a position that's hard to defend, which may explain why the US delegation reportedly offered no press conferences at the Bonn meeting. Developing nations are neither significant contributors to nor beneficiaries of the use of fossil fuels. Their ecological footprint is minimal in comparison to America's where per capita emissions are, for instance, approximately 300 times those of Mozambique. And their position is not only hard to defend, it is also hard to explain.

Why are the Americans so desperately keen for inclusion of the South?

Surely the last thing fossil fuel advocates, and by extension the US government, want are moves in the South to reduce emissions. Exempted nations would not only continue to provide multinational corporations with regulation-free playgrounds for the kind of work no longer allowed in the North, but virtually the entire infrastructure

of the North is geared towards building dependence on fossil fuels in the South. According to Friends of the Earth, the export promotion agencies of rich countries as well as the World Bank are the biggest sponsors of fossil fuels in the South, the former contributing \$115 billion to such projects between 1995-99. And judging by recent recipient lists of World Bank loans, (described by the Wall Street Journal as 'a Who's Who of the country's publicly listed bluechips') it is very much America's corporate big boys who benefit from the process.

Were the South to be included in the agreement America would see its dustbin regulated, global emissions capped, fossil fuel subsidies to the South penalised, and the prospect of having to purchase the right to pollute in countries where previously it had a free rein.

Meanwhile, the South would be set on a course, buoyed by its new found access to a carbon market worth billions of dollars, to build an alternative and much more healthy infrastructure. That in turn would leave America in a structurally weaker position, with the South growing less dependent on fossil fuels while the North battles to overcome an addiction that they will have bypassed. More than two billion people are not served by electricity. Surely it must be in the interests of Mr Bush's backers to get them hooked on fossil fuels not wind?

The answer is that America almost certainly does not want the South to join the protocol. It just doesn't serve their interests. That became painfully obvious in Genoa in July, when the Group of 8 industrial nations put forward a proposal for rich nations to remove 'incentives and other supports for environmentally harmful energy technologies' in the South. The Americans vetoed it, they said, because they want to see the marketplace rather than government decide on the future of renewable energy. What they failed to acknowledge was that the proposal was aimed at removing exactly those big government perks long enjoyed by dirty projects.

And the behaviour of Exxon chief Lee Raymond, a key Bush puppeteer, further reinforces that view. He has complained bitterly that Kyoto exempts the South, and at the same time has threatened Southern nations with loss of investments if they participate in efforts to combat climate change.

By all accounts, the American plan is to encourage polluting behaviour in the South while pretending to want the South to engage in the debate. And the European Union has fallen straight into the American trap by allowing political correctness to impede discussions.

Had they called the president's bluff by agreeing to include the South, on conditions acceptable to them (increased loans, less stringent reduction targets, debt relief and other methods to enable them to bypass fossil fuels and develop cleanly) they might actually have been doing the South a favour. It's all very well for the EU to defend the right of Southern countries to 'catch-up', but in the real world, we know they can't. We've only been able to achieve what we've achieved in the North by freely exploiting colonies in the South. They clearly enjoy no such advantage. Their only hope in fact is to learn from our mistakes and opt for a healthier course.

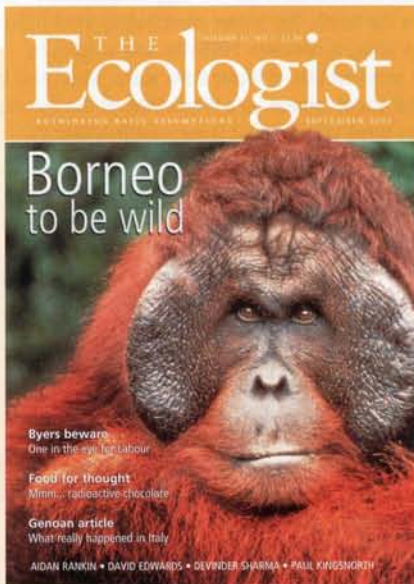
An unpalatable truth perhaps, but acknowledging it might well have given European nations and the Third world the last laugh.



RICHARD WILLSON

THE Ecologist contents

VOLUME 31 NO 7, SEPTEMBER 2001



COVER FEATURE

Once, the population of orangutans in Southeast Asia numbered hundreds of thousands. Now it is less than 20,000. Destruction of their rainforest habitat, poaching and the illegal trade in them as pets has decimated the species. It is estimated that unless major steps are taken to protect the orangutan, they will be extinct in 50 years.

Another native of Borneo, the Dayak people, are also increasingly finding their existence threatened. Traditional hunter-gatherers, they have lived on the island for at least 5,000 years. However, fears are that like the orangutan, the Dayaks are now at risk, victims of the World Bank and its development policies. Page 34.

Cover photograph: Ian Redmond/The Orangutan Foundation

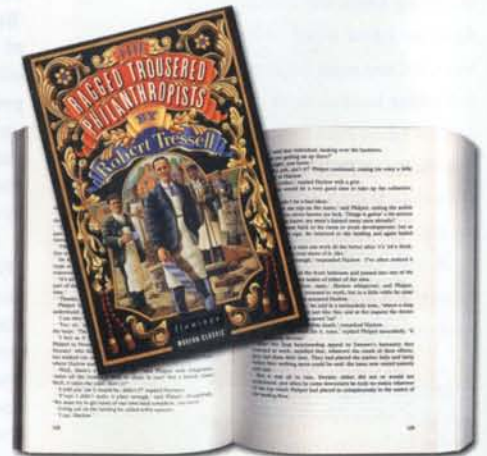
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If we really knew what was going on, says Eduardo Goncalves, we'd find a lot more of our food hard to stomach.

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Nuclear waste, Colombia, our debates, and the Forest Stewardship Council are among the many topics you respond to this month. As ever, we want your opinion on any issue we cover... as well as those you think we should.

Contact us at: The Ecologist, Unit 18 Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ.

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Please attach your name and postal address, even when sending by email.

The editor reserves the right to shorten or edit correspondence where necessary.

Mind breeding

Our July editorial (*The enemy within*, Vol 31/6) carried an indictment of the planned dumping of radioactive waste into Plymouth's river Tamar. Wanting to highlight the issue, Vera Chaney of Green Network sent the article to Colin Breed MP (S E Cornwall), who earlier this year had introduced an adjournment debate on radioactive discharges into the Tamar. Here we publish his reply, followed by our response.

DML has been refitting nuclear submarines for quite some time but it is the refitting of the new Trident submarines which will commence next year which has brought about the application for a variation in the nuclear Waste Discharge Licence. It is simply wrong to suggest that ageing nuclear submarines have coolant systems which are beginning to crack. The so-called Trafalgar Class Submarine does continue to flush cooling systems into the open sea when required, but the Trident Submarines will have a sealed coolant system, which means it will not require replacement for many years and it is the build up of tritium which will then have

to be disposed of when a refit takes place.

You also have to understand that the Plymouth district, which is quite broad, has been living with the reality of nuclear submarines for very many years. It employs a considerable number of people and much of the local economy revolves around the dockyard in one way or another. Whilst there has always been a vociferous group of anti-nuclear views, which I respect, they are tiny when compared to the population as a whole in this area.

May I also say that Zac Goldsmith's suggestion that it is only 200 jobs is totally inaccurate as it is very, very much more and I have to say that this sort of statement does not assist those of us trying to make a realistic assessment. Having said that, I do want to ensure that no radioactive waste material is dumped into the river or the sea unless it is absolutely necessary and to date I have not received a simple answer to my rather simple question: 'Can the radioactive coolant material be stored on land safely until it can be properly disposed of without

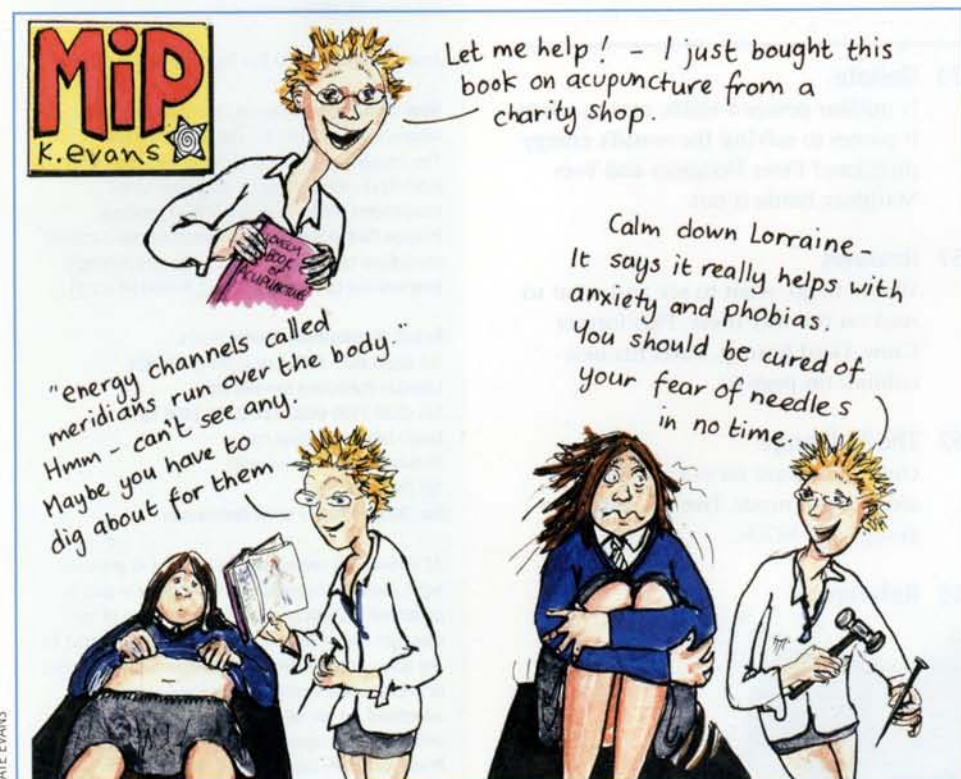
dumping at sea?' As you might imagine I have received conflicting scientific reports and had interesting conversations with quite rational and intelligent people on both sides of the argument, but as far as I am concerned we still have much to learn about radioactive substances, as well as microwaves used in telephones, particularly in respect of long-term consequences. It is for that reason that I do believe we need to continue to press for proper public debate, open and honest distribution of information and a recognition that there is a balance of risks in much of what we do, which has to be properly recognised and ultimately enabling the public to come to a collective decision, weighing the benefit ratios.

Again it is important that this generation does not take all the benefits and leave all the costs to our children and their children and perhaps this is at the very heart of the debate in so many of these areas.

Colin Breed MP, London, UK

Ecologist reply: Colin Breed is right to point out that it is Trident missile-carrying nuclear submarines – the Vanguard class – which will produce the extra tritium emissions in the Plymouth area. But why he finds this no cause for concern is puzzling. For some unrevealed reason, the sole contract to refit the UK's ageing Vanguard subs is to be carried out in the middle of a city of 250,000. Residents of Plymouth have a right to be concerned as nuclear experts point out that such urban nuclear operations run contrary to the usual citing criteria.

Furthermore Mr Breed's assertion that 'it is simply quite wrong to suggest that ageing nuclear submarines have coolant systems which are beginning to crack' is bizarre. The world now knows that HMS Tireless limped into Gibraltar last year after its coolant system developed severe cracks and began flushing huge quantities of tritiated coolant water into the ocean. As a Trafalgar Class nuclear submarine, Tireless is powered by a nuclear reactor but does not carry nuclear warheads. Britain has 12 submarines of this class and all of them have now been found to have the same problem as Tireless. The necessary repairs have never been done before and are being pioneered in Plymouth. Furthermore, another proposal likely to be given the go ahead is the onland storage of reactor chambers from decommissioned nuclear powered subs. This dumping of intermediate level radioactive material is to take place in Plymouth itself. Once again the cause for local concern is genuine and scientifically well founded.



Colin Breed's suggestion that the risk is worth taking for reasons of local employment was never less relevant in Plymouth. The refitting of Vanguard class submarines may make DML millions of pounds but it will actually only require around 100 employees.

Mr Breed mentions his concerns over mobile phone radiation in his letter, a worry which must double the feelings of unease in Plymouth. Mobile phone call centres now employ more Plymouth residents than the navy. As the Chairman of the Board of Governors for a local infant school told *The Ecologist*: 'They have this arrogant assumption they're always right and if you interfere then you're talking about jobs... it's a lot of bunkum because what we're talking about is the environmental conditions, the quality of life for children and the future of the city.'

You can read more about this issue by investigative journalist Jim Carey next month.

Paradigm fashion

Jakob von Uexkull (*A new human story*, Vol 31/4) must have heard a bell pealing somewhere, but obviously he doesn't know who's doing the ringing. A council for the future to build the new paradigm sounds very like the third way camel comrade Blair is foisting on Britain in the best tradition of academics reforming the world to suit their 'own' Weltanschauung.

Political, religious and civil society leaders as well as representatives of business, the sciences and so on [sic] are exactly the people who have got us in the environmental and social mess that we are in. It will be increasingly obvious as time goes on that the interests represented on this mooted council will be exactly the same as the ones now doing the running.

One thing is certain, the people powered by drives and motives, values and creeds that are destroying us and 'our' earth will never give up. The new paradigm will be formulated by people who know the difference between civilisation and culture, who practice civil obedience in the face of laws wrought by politicians and enforced by those in the pay of corporate interests, who know where they stand when they take hand-outs or 'earnings' which are a quid pro quo for keeping one's mouth shut or playing a tune in harmony with that of big business and (big) government interests; who know the coal face or at least understand it.

Academics live in a fairy land. If Jakob von Uexkull is not an academic, he is frightfully naïve.

Jacob Jonker, Hoorn, The Netherlands

In for a pound

I was disappointed by the article on Steve Thoburn (*Profile: the Good* Vol 31/5). Surely he is not a 'metric martyr' but an 'Imperial martyr' and his crime was not selling a pound of bananas but selling bananas by the pound. This is a legal, not an ecological topic.

In that Mr Thoburn is breaking the law he is certainly not 'good' and he provides a prime example of 'little England' thinking. The whole of the conversion to metric units in this country is confused, eg descriptions of fuel consumption by cars are reported in miles per gallon. Where does one buy gallons of petrol? However conversion to metric units is not only a matter of our being part of the EU and agreements made on our elected representatives, but that most of the world uses metric units and our children are taught science in SI units with basic units of metre and kilogram.

If your 'martyr' must sell his wares by the 'pound' all he has to do to satisfy the law is sell them by the '454g' and stop wasting taxpayers' money in legal battles. If his arguments are really about freedom and choice how would he react if his wholesaler decided to sell him apples by the bushel or peck and his wife was sold her dress length by the ell and her milk by the gill?

Your last point about the 'quarter pounder' is a red herring since this is now a name, like the editor of *The Ecologist* being a 'goldsmith'.

Reuben Leberman, Huntingdon, UK

Middle men

With reference to Michael Meacher's letter (Vol 31/5) following the environment



survey commissioned by *The Ecologist*, we can get quite an insight as to how the government regards its electorate from when he refers to his 'target voters of Middle England'. Presumably, we can deduce from this that 'New Labour' has no interest in appealing to anybody else's sensibilities or as to whether or not anybody else will vote for them.

Julian P O'Brien, Loughborough, UK

Counting the cost

I am fed up of hearing the politician's excuse, repeated by Michael Meacher's letter, that it is difficult to get 'people to actually pay more' to improve the environment. Many of us are paying dearly already. Here's one example from my own experience:

Distressed by problems with 'hygienic' wrappers, chemical residues, and commercial cruelty, I turned my back to supermarkets and now subscribe to an organic box scheme. The resulting dent in my housekeeping is alarming, but I feel it's worth supporting responsible local growers and traders, and because my family is getting good food, and a healthy awareness of what grows where, and when. If the government

really put its weight behind local, healthy market gardening schemes, there would soon be a great demand for their produce, and my housekeeping bill would not have to suffer as it does.

Kay Green, Hastings, UK

Colombia unplanned

In devoting an issue to the situation in Colombia (Vol 31/6) I would have hoped that a clearer appraisal than the one you gave would have been possible. Although the paramilitaries are mentioned none of the articles gave a clear impression to uninformed readers of the real situation in Colombia.

The article entitled *Colombia's Tragedy* was subtitled as a more damning overview

JUST A QUICK WORD...

THEM AND US

I expect that by now you have already received a few letters from disgruntled Canadians pointing out the mistake in the July/August issue on p.57 where reference is made to "Alternatives Journal" originating in the University of Waterloo, US.

A little care in editing would have discovered that this particular university is in Waterloo, Ontario, CANADA. Put this down to just another form of Canadian inferiority complex if you will but we really do take offense to having one of our finest universities advertised as being American. Not yet, anyway.

Larry Dufay, Ontario, Canada.

of the FARC's activities. The article itself mentions human rights abuses by both FARC and paramilitaries and gives some figures but does not state clearly who has been responsible for what. The subtitle leads one to think that the FARC are the main protagonists. All human rights groups working in Colombia cite the paramilitary groups as responsible for at least 80 per cent of atrocities.

The paramilitaries operate without restriction and with the support of the military and the upper classes. Their mandate is simply to clear peasants by any means possible and their methods are brutal. Last year Bill Clinton waived human rights issues when he ratified the so called US 'aid programme' (80 per cent military), suggesting that military and paramilitary abuses were being curbed. Human rights abuses by those parties immediately increased. Plan Colombia is a plan motivated by neo-liberal policies with no regard for the wishes of the Colombian people. With your ambiguous editorial stance you have missed an opportunity to enlighten your readership as to the terrible reality facing millions of Colombians who live in fear of the right wing death squads that label anyone working for social change as a guerilla. In Colombia a magazine such as *The Ecologist* would be one of their targets. Our freedom of speech demands that we use it to speak out clearly and firmly in support of those who lack such freedoms, particularly as, in this case, our government is supporting the imperialist intentions of the US in Colombia.

Chris Pothecary, E Sussex, UK



Dr Patrick Curry, ECO, London, UK

Down on the pharma
Matt Ridley (*Debate*, Vol 31/5) may well be right that outsiders to the science of genetics have a simplified understanding of its subtleties. But his argument is weakened by his dismissiveness of the political economy of genetics. Most of the substantive criticisms raised by Sue Mayer are not met with much empirical evidence but his adept 'turning the tables' rhetoric. We learn from Ridley, an author on genetics who therefore has a vested interest in its promotion, that genetics will not 'lead to corporate control of science

Down on the pharma

but the reverse'. This is not only laughable in the face of the current corporate economy, but is nonsensical in that he implies that scientists will control corporations (not a pleasant thought at any rate).

He is ignorant of or disingenuous about the fact that corporate investment in biotech is crucially reliant upon subsidies from unknowing taxpayers. Just ask Ralph Nader's *Public Citizen* about how Big Pharma relies on corporate welfare and then privatises and gouges consumers for profits.

Richard Wilcox, Tokyo, Japan

Untenable stance

Untenable stance

The striking thing about Joji Morishita's argument in favour of whaling (*Debate*, Vol 31/6) is his attempt to identify his opponents' concerns as 'ethical and moral and not scientific', and therefore as illegitimate.

This blatantly self-contradictory position needs to be identified as the hypocrisy it is. No amount of scientific evidence, on either side, can replace the question of whether or not actually to engage in whaling (or any other act, for that matter); the decision to do so is itself an irreducibly ethical decision. So the attempt to suppress this dimension of the issue in the name of science entails suppressing precisely what most needs to be brought out into the open and aired. It is unfortunate that Fred O'Regan tacitly concurred, instead of calling Morishita's bluff and exposing the kind of values and ethics that permit whalers to treat intelligent, social and sentient fellow-creatures as a 'harvest-able marine resource'.

Dr Patrick Curry, ECO, London, UK

Correction(s)

Correction(s)

Good news about The Horrors of Intensive Salmon Farming (Special Report, June 2001) is that a representative of Shetland's Salmon Farming Industry has informed us that Furunculosis is not a new disease – the 1937 Diseases of Fish Act was introduced to control the spread of this bacterial problem by the angling fraternity and that the use of Ivermectin has been banned. Bad news is that of the two 'deliberate' errata we made, he only spotted one. In 1997 there were 6,398 active salmon farms in Scotland and prior to its ban Scottish salmon farms used up to 9 tonnes of Dichlorvos or DDVP.

Following last month's article *Saving the wood from the trees*, on tropical timber certification, we invited the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) to reply. As our mailbag soon proved, they were not the only ones stimulated to write in...



Matter of degrees

The environmental movement is most effective when the different people within it push in their different ways in the same direction. Laschefski and Ferris (the authors of the article) favour the boycott of tropical timber strategy. Meanwhile Friends of the Earth, who Laschefski used to work for, are actively involved in the FSC Working Groups in many countries. I don't believe that any of us have a monopoly on the truth. We can only make a personal judgement on how best to use our time. One of the few things we can be sure of is that the state of the world's forests has got steadily worse on a global scale despite all our different approaches to date.

However I don't believe that FSC is accelerating the problem and I believe it has the potential to make a significant contribution. My role in FSC is to represent the interests of over 100 environmental groups who share that view on the board of directors.

It is true that FSC is not a purist or elitist certification programme. As a market mechanism it would have had no impact if it had been. It would have recognised a few people who were already doing ecoforestry without impacting at all on the bulk of the world's forestry where change is seriously needed. The status quo in the timber industry has long been that those who pillaged forests made the money. Those who took more care were penalised because they bore the internalised costs of responsible management compared with mining timber in frontier areas. They were not recognised in the market place for this which made them uncompetitive. If FSC forest certification and timber labelling can start to redress this balance towards

the more responsible forest managers it will have achieved something. Many environmentalists who are involved and support the idea at a general level understandably want all the certified forests to be beyond criticism, which is never likely to be the case.

I want to examine the question of certifying timber extraction in what FSC calls 'High Conservation Value Forests' (HCVF). The first question FSC had to answer was: 'Are there any circumstances under which any HCVF's should have timber extracted?' If the answer is 'No' it is relatively simple to implement – just work out the definition of a HCVF and stay away from them.

FSC addressed this question through consultation within its international membership. The answer that came back was: 'Yes – there are some circumstances where it is appropriate.' My personal view is that to fully implement the precautionary principle one would have to cease most natural resource extraction, not only timber. However, I accept that mine is a minority view from a privileged country and that the views of local groups in countries that still have such forests must

this category precisely because it is so difficult to do and because most of the timber used in the more environmentally sensitive markets of Europe comes from European managed forests and plantations. FSC's largest accredited certifier estimates that less than 5 per cent of the certificates they issue are for tropical natural forest and even fewer of these are in tropical primary forest. This is seen by some critics as a virtual boycott of timber from such forests since so few of them have been successful in achieving certification.

We are not home and dry yet and successful certification in HCVF tropical forests was never going to be easy.

This letter reflects my views as an environmental representative on the board of FSC rather than an organisational perspective.

Hannah Scrase
FSC Board of Directors

Consumer the only choice

The standards promoted by FSC and supported by the likes of Greenpeace go beyond the kind of 'tightening' that governments of many tropical countries would consider necessary. The choice, then, is not between 'no logging' and 'FSC-based logging'. It is between 'business as usual' and 'FSC-based logging if we are lucky'.

The authors point out that much of the international market is to countries without a green consumer movement. This is exactly why a North

American and European boycott has virtually no impact on tropical forest destruction. Certification does work, however – companies may not sell all their wood to North America and Europe – but these are high value markets. If they want to sell even 1 per cent of the wood as certified, the whole forest has to be managed properly.

If the authors believe the green consumer is a myth, why worry about FSC? Wouldn't a boycott require a green consumer? Who will buy the fair trade non-timber forests products that they advocate?

No, certification is not a panacea that will magically negate subsidies and tax incentives which promote deforestation. No, certification is not an alternative to protected areas. Certification is, however, one piece of the jigsaw. For our part, we support FSC in providing 'an incentive for better planned logging'.

Laschesfki and Freris are right about one

thing. FSC will not work unless consumers support it. We have the choice.

Matthew Weban-Smith
Soil Association Forestry Programme Manager

Not just a lumberjack

'...Yet foresters are trained almost exclusively in how to cut down trees.'

This reflects a commonly held misconception about the forestry profession. One has only to look at the prospectuses for courses in forestry to appreciate the wide range of pure and applied, biophysical, socio-economic and managerial sciences that are taught; these are also expected of professional membership and registration bodies such as the Institute of Chartered Foresters. The blanket condemnation implied in this article is unjustified.

Professor Jeff Burley,
Director, Oxford Forestry Institute, UK

Backing us up

I've been involved with the FSC since 1996 as a member of the Canadian Maritime Regional Standards Committee (MRSC), and until recently, as senior policy adviser for the Sierra Club of Canada on certification issues.

During this time the SCC launched two separate appeals against certifications of J D Irving Ltd, in both New Brunswick and the state of Maine, after documenting numerous instances where certifiers failed to adhere to even the most rudimentary FSC principles and guidelines.

What has been most shocking is the inability and/or unwillingness of FSC and engo supporters to openly confront and deal with these issues. At first I saw this as merely a simple top/down example of the blind leading the blind.

My experiences now lead me to believe something far more ominous for forest activism is at play, stemming from the dominant influence of the WWF on FSC affairs, and the dependence of engo 'campaigns' on various foundation funding sources.

The publication of the piece on Brazil will lend a lot more credibility to our planned documentation of similar experiences in eastern Canada. Your efforts are most appreciated.

Charles Restino, Ontario, Canada

The original article, plus an in-depth response to it by the FSC, as well as the full texts of these letters, can all be found on www.theecologist.org

'Making it work consistently well in practice is a learning process for all of us and one still in its early stages'

be accommodated. Many of the environmental groups in developing countries want FSC to operate in their HCVFs because they see it as one of very few options they have to influence the industry and to curb its hitherto free rein.

Having concluded that there are some circumstances where it is appropriate the next questions (where, when, how, with what safeguards) are still being debated. The result of this protracted debate so far is an approach where, under some circumstances HCVFs can be certified. The specific conservation values of the forest must be identified and, whatever they are, they must be conserved. That's the theory (abridged version). Making it work consistently well in practice is a learning process for all of us and one which is still in its early stages.

The article implied that certification of commercial logging in primary forests is a large part of what FSC does. Very few of the certified operations to date come into

Tinto Tainted

by Gavin McGregor

Mining giant Rio Tinto's massive PR exercise is full of holes.

Rio Tinto, the world's largest mining corporation, is continuing to exploit the environment and mistreat its workers despite signing up to a 'Global Compact' that commits it to cleaning up its act. Concerned about his company's image problem, chairman Sir Robert Wilson attempted to make efforts to 'engage with its critics' and in a generous spread in the *Observer* on 8 July set out on his mission to correct a 'popular prejudice' that is 'grossly oversimplified'.

The Global Mining Initiative (GMI), set up by 10 major minerals companies and overseen by UN agencies, the World Bank, governments and NGOs, will, he claimed, spur the industry to prioritise sustainability and improve its record on social issues. An 'independent' report, due out early next year, will track progress and provide 'pointers to how the issues can be addressed.'

If the report is as rigorous as Wilson suggests, he will have egg on his face next Spring. Whilst whispering sweet nothings about the need, for example,



to protect water resources, watchdog group CorpWatch alleges massive daily dumping of toxic waste into the river system around the company's gold mine in Indonesian Irian Jaya, with disastrous consequences for communities downstream. Rio Tinto mine works there have also decapitated the sacred Grasberg mountain and collusion is alleged between corporate security forces and the Indonesian military to suppress local opposition with violence.

In Borneo, the recent report of Oxfam's Mining Ombudsman documents the devastation of local communities by the company's Kelian gold mine, and follows independent reports of the sexual harassment and

rape of the company's employees that for years went uninvestigated.

Last year an Australian television documentary revealed the shooting of small-time prospectors in Brazil by company security guards. It also reported the exposure of mine workers there to lead poisoning, and the surveillance and sacking of union activists.

Meanwhile Rio Tinto, in its glossy corporate 'Review' magazine, congratulates itself on recognising the 'mutual obligation between mine and... community.' Photographs of smiling Australian Aborigines illustrate a new relationship that apparently 'embodies courage and maturity.'

Elsewhere, the magazine boasts of the creation in Utah of 'a gigantic open pit that is reputed to be one of the few man-made features visible from the moon'.

If the much-trumpeted GMI sustainability and social report fails next year to spot Rio Tinto's devastating effects even from the Earth's surface, it will be a telling measure of its claimed independence.

Watch this space ■

NOTES &

'Not one person has died by eating genetically modified food. On the other hand, malnutrition kills millions every year.' Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP head.

'The first [aim] is [approval for] Round-Up Ready soybeans in Brazil. The second is making progress in Europe – specifically around Round-Up Ready corn. Number three is Bt-cotton in India. We believe that if we can get RUR soybeans approved in Brazil... it could unlock the Latin American opportunity, which is the second biggest behind the US. Henrik Verfaillie, Monsanto's CEO.

'We are all very hopeful that the last domino will fall. That's why the environmentalists are putting up a stink down there in Brazil. They know that if that one goes, it's all gone.'

Bob Callanan, spokesman for the American Soybean Association, in support of GM-crops.

'We strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us.' Delegates of 22 African countries to the UN FAO beg to differ with Bush Monsanto *et al* on the subject of GM foods.

30,000 field tests of genetically engineered organisms have been authorised by the US Department of Agriculture between 1987 and 2000, reports the US Public Interest Research Group.

52% of Americans believe GM foods are unsafe and 93% say GM food should be labelled, according to an ABC News survey

Here's more food for thought...

'If the Berlin Wall can fall down then the CAP can be reformed.' Margaret Beckett, UK agriculture minister. But did it fall or was it pushed?

'A Texas beef company, with 22 citations, was found chopping hooves off live cattle. In another

Genetically modified promises

The agrochemical company Syngenta, formed from the agrochemical units of AstraZeneca (formerly Zeneca) and Novartis has announced that it has applied to test 'Terminator' gene technology in an open field trial at Jealott's Hill International Research Centre, Bracknell, Berkshire (*News, The Ecologist*, Vol 31/6). The announcement, which appeared as a public notice in the *Bracknell News* in late July, sparked fury amongst local residents, who have established a group named GreenWatch to oppose the company's plans.

In a letter from the Zeneca Research and Development director, dated 24 February 1999, the company stated: 'Zeneca is not developing any system that would stop

farmers growing second-generation seed, nor do we have any intention of doing so.' The proposed trial shows that Syngenta has broken this promise and is intending to create a plant which could not survive to a second generation, or even grow successfully during a first generation, without the application of the company's own chemicals.

'These developments clearly have no role in a sustainable agriculture policy, as promised by Margaret Beckett at the DEFRA. It is to be hoped that the application for the trial will be refused,' said Marcus Williamson of gmfoodnews.com. Up to 30 more GM test sites are on their way to the UK. For more about the murky world of GM, log on to www.togg.org.uk ■

A monthly roundup of George W Bush's recent words of wisdom

'I know what I believe. I will continue to articulate what I believe and what I believe – I believe what I believe is right.' Rome, July 22, 2001

'I can't tell you what it's like to be in Europe, for example, to be talking about the greatness of America. But the true greatness of America are the people.'

Visiting the Jefferson Memorial, Washington, D.C., July 2, 2001

'We spent a lot of time talking about Africa, as we should. Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease.' Gothenburg, Sweden, June 14, 2001



D'OHBYA!

'I say things because I believe them'

QUOTES

Texan plant with about two dozen violations, Federal officials found nine live cattle dangling from an overhead chain. Secret videos from an Iowa pork plant show hogs squealing and kicking as they are being lowered into boiling water...
Robert Byrd to the US Senate

89% of UK consumers see organic farming as better for the environment, according to a Co-op survey. 74% consider organic food safer for their family.

Globalisation: free trade or free lunch? Surely there's no such thing...

'Those who protest free trade are no friends of the poor.' George W Bush

'If we fail to launch a new [trade] round this year... everyone would lose... But the biggest losers would be the poor and the weak.'
Mike Moore, Director General of the World [Free]Trade Organisation.

'Its time for actions to speak louder than words.'
James Wolfensohn, World Bank president.

'The World Bank Group alone has lent \$470bn since its inception, and \$225bn in just the last decade. Visit some of the poorest nations in the world, and you will see we have too little to show for it. It's time for a new approach to eliminating poverty.'
Paul H O'Neill, secretary of the treasury to the Economic Club of Detroit has an idea.

'The unions are the main backbone of the [US] anti-globalisation movement - they misuse young people's enthusiasm.'
Milton Friedman, Nobel laureate

'These guys don't represent anyone, if the public knew their views, they'd disagree with them. I just think we've got to be a lot more robust about this.'
Tony Blair on the anti-globalisation demonstrators

Over the next 10 years, the White House estimates it will lose \$2 trillion if it doesn't get Fast Track Authority to extend free trade to the whole of South America.

No business like snow business

The Arctic Wildlife Refuge is not the only reserve to be soiled at the hands of President Bush. One of the final acts of Bill Clinton's presidency was to approve a gradual ban on the use of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. For example, during the 1992-93 season more than 77,000 snowmobiles entered the park, creating what one ranger described as a 'tunnel of fumes'. What's more, to date there are no emissions measurements on snowmobiles, largely due to the fact that snowmobiles have not been regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. But Bush has now delayed the ban in the face of legal threats from snowmobile manufacturers, and fresh negotiations are under way, with one manufacturer predicting the deal would result in a daily limit of 800 of the vehicles into the park - which would be an improvement to the environment of what after all, is a National Park. See www.earthisland.org



AP PHOTOS

La maladie imaginaire

If press coverage is anything to go by, Americans started to get social anxiety disorder (SAD) about three years ago. In 1997-98 the condition was referred to about 50 times in the nation's media. But a year later things suddenly got sadder, a lot sadder. In 1999 there were more than a billion references to it in the US press. According to the *International Herald Tribune* the increase in stories was not spurred by medical developments but was part of a campaign - coordinated by Cohn & Wolfe, a New York Public relations agency. The strategy included pitches to

newspapers, radio and TV and testimonials from advocates and doctors claiming that SAD was America's third most common mental disorder with over 10m sufferers; only depression and alcoholism claim more victims. 'Paxil is the only FDA-approved medication for the treatment of social anxiety disorder,' was the caring sharing marketing message. But the plug for the drug was no accident. Cohn&Wolfe was working at the behest of SmithKline Beecham, now known as Glaxo SmithKline. Whilst aggressive campaigns such as this one raise the

concern that pharmaceutical companies are seeking new disorders for existing drugs they also generate an artificial and increasing need for pharmaceutical inventions amongst huge proportions of people who had not until then 'realised' they needed help. What's more, the expensive campaign paid off in the crowded anti-depressant market. Glaxo SmithKline's 2000 annual report claims that Paxil 'became the No 1 in the US selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor market for new retail prescription in 2000.' SAD people, happy Glaxo ■

PHOTO NEWS



AP PHOTOS

Reaction to the German government's abandonment of a law that would have made a legal distinction between 'ecologically favourable' and 'ecologically unfavourable' packaging, and would have imposed penalties on the latter. This development marks a victory for European packaging interests who have succeeded in convincing 8 of the 15 EU member countries to register objections to eco-friendly packaging laws.

Barking up the wrong tree

A trio of anti-environmental groups and companies has launched a multi-tiered attack on the Rainforest Action Network (RAN). At the same time as a conservative group called Frontier Freedom Foundation (heavily supported by timber, tobacco and oil money) is lobbying to revoke RAN's non-profit status, logging giant Boise Cascade is aggressively targeting RAN's funders with threatening letters.

Both are working with the anti-green Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise. RAN primarily campaigns against corporations destroying old growth forests around the world. Its tactics include consumer boycotts and symbolic efforts to capture media attention, including abseiling down corporate buildings and unleashing giant banners. For more information or to help defend RAN, visit www.ran.org ■

Kyoto calling...

'I don't think we are taken as seriously today as we were a few years ago'

Tom Daschle, US Senate Majority Leader on President Bush's opposition to Kyoto.

'We have to control these loopholes; if there are too many we make the protocol too loose, and the treaty is undermined.'

Olivier Deuze, Belgian energy minister.

'While we do not believe the Kyoto Protocol is sound public policy for the US, we do not intend to prevent others from going ahead with the treaty so long as they do not harm legitimate US interests.'

Paula Dobrinasky, US undersecretary of state.

'If Mr Koizumi [Japanese PM] still plans to begin a sustained economic growth, Kyoto is the last thing he should sign... Fashionable as it is to opine by the poolside, Japan can read the numbers as well as anyone.'
Wall Street Journal.

Meanwhile, 25% of the Amazonian forests have disappeared in recent years, says Professor Alcock of Penn State University, and in about 10-15 years they will reach 'the point of no return' when they can no longer sustain themselves and recover from man-made destruction...

... and 90% of the Mesopotamian marshlands known as the Fertile Crescent have now been lost as a result of drainage and damming, the UNEP estimates...

...but on a lighter note, solar roof installation projects in Germany for this year will replace 40,000 oil heaters, according to Der Spiegel...

... just as long as they don't deflect Bush's plans for a little protection racket...

'The success of this dialogue will, by and large, determine the strategic stability of the entire world.'

Igor Ivanov, Russian Foreign Minister on US-Russian missile defence talks.

Delisting Wal-Mart

The leading US index for 'socially responsible' investors is putting its money where its mouth is.

Just as Asda, the recently acquired Wal-Mart supermarket, announced plans to cut a further £100m from shopping bills, New York-based KLD & Co, which compiles the *Domini400 Social Index*, booted the world's largest retailer from its ranks because of the company's dealings with the repressive military regime in Burma and its use of sweatshop factories in China and Central Asia.

The move prompted at least one mutual fund to sell its Wal-Mart holdings, but several other mutual funds use the Domini400 to make investments, including New York-based Domini Social Investment Ltd, which manages \$1.4 billion of Domini Social Equity Funds. As a result of the

change, the firm dumped \$60 million of Wal-Mart stocks. Sigward Moser, president of Domini Social Investments, said the firm tried to discuss the issues with the retailer before it was removed from the index, but the company was 'very unresponsive'.

Whilst Wal-Mart did not respond to its eviction from the index, it will have to pay a \$1 million civil fine to resolve claims that it violated the Clean Water Act at 17 locations in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Massachusetts. The settlement also commits the retailer to establish \$4.5m environmental management plan to improve its compliance with environmental laws... all of which is peanuts for a company which posted sales of \$191 billion last year ■

Seattle do nicely

Breathe in deeply, there's still some small hope...

In a rebuke to the Bush administration for its climate change stance, Seattle Mayor Paul Schell announced support for the Kyoto Protocol and called on other local governments to adopt policies to fight global warming. Seattle's new policy will commit 'City Light', the city's public electric utility, to a policy of zero net greenhouse gas emissions, the first major utility in the country to aim at this target.

City Light has already sold its share of a coal fired steam plant and will mitigate emissions from its remaining fossil-fuel resources – 600,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide each year. For the next 10 years, the utility will produce 100 average megawatts of power through energy efficiency and conservation and acquire another 100 average megawatts of non-hydro renewable energy. Some of the funds for greenhouse gas mitigation projects will go into the local economy in the form of alternative transportation

programmes, partnerships with businesses seeking to become climate neutral, and development of energy efficient technologies.

'Every city and every individual can take steps to reduce global warming. We are sending a message to the federal administration that it is time to act, just like the rest of the world,' Mayor Schell told reporters.

...on both sides of the pond

Seattle and Settle have more than a comment in common (see *Comment*, p46). In a similar move to its state-side near-namesake, Yorkshire's regional development agency has announced it will stand by its target of cutting emissions by over a fifth by 2010, despite the dilution of targets agreed at Kyoto ■



AP PHOTOS

Paper/tiger?

Forest Stewardship Council faces an important test case

The habitat of one of the world's rarest creatures, the Sumatran tiger, could be threatened by a logging company that has recently been awarded an 'eco-timber' certificate under the Forest Stewardship Council (*Saving the wood from the trees, The Ecologist* Vol 31/6). In a letter to the UK-based forest assessment company SGS-Qualifor, which issued the certificate, the Rainforest Foundation together with Indonesia's largest national environmental organisation, WALHI, demanded that the certificate should be immediately removed. Both organisations claim that, whilst the forest being logged by PT Diamond Raya is a habitat to Sumatran tigers, of which there are about left 300 in the wild, the logging company has not taken any specific measures to protect them, and has failed to carry out an environmental impact assessment of its activities. Critics argue that the FSC fails to define under what circumstances certified logging is acceptable, and does not incorporate large protected areas to ensure sustainability of forest landscape.

The FSC was set up in 1993 by environmental groups and timber companies in order to provide a globally recognised system of showing consumers which wood products are from 'environmentally acceptable, socially beneficial and economically sustainable' sources. FSC accredits private and independent organisations such as SGS-Qualifor to carry out the actual assessments of logging companies on their behalf ■

STAN AT EASE by Stan Eales

CONTEMPORARY SCHIZOPHRENICS

POLITICIANS WHO THINK THEY ARE ENVIRONMENTALISTS



THIEVES WHO THINK THEY ARE BANK MANAGERS



ARMS MANUFACTURERS WHO THINK THEY ARE PEACEMAKERS



VILLAGE IDIOTS WHO THINK THEY ARE PRESIDENT



The future's bright...

Britain's nuclear generation ain't over yet.

'We see no economic case for the building of any new nuclear power stations.'

And so we went and voted for Tony Blair in 1997. Then came 2001, a re-election and a report so efficiently styled that the title doesn't even say what it's all about. What's to be expected from a strategy entitled Cabinet's Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU)? If nothing else, a lesson in Blairite philosophy: Performance and innovation have according to this tradition a close connection with 'challenges', such as: 'Meeting the challenge of global warming while ensuring secure, diverse and reliable energy supplies at a competitive price.'

Then along came a man called Brian Wilson, the new minister of State for Industry and Energy and a known supporter of nuclear power. PIU according to Wilson, 'will also need to consider what, if any, role the nuclear industry should play'.

In comes yet another all new and glowing committee, the 'energy-policy review committee', headed by Brian Wilson himself. What this means in plain English is best

exemplified by looking at what has happened to one UK nuclear operator since the launch of the energy review. Whilst just two months ago, British Energy PLC, which owns eight of the UK's 21 nuclear plants, was looking decidedly shaky after reporting a 95 per cent drop in pretax profit, its prospect now look brighter than ever.

British Energy's share price has rebounded from 228.5 pence just before the review to 276 pence just after. Although the company's health will depend on more factors, like the liberalisation of an all European energy market, 'certainly the softening in (the anti-nuclear) attitude by the government would be a long-term positive for the company,' said Clive Roberts, analyst at Charles Stanley and Co.

Although Blair argues that that he doesn't want an expansion of nuclear generation he equally won't want to see the proportion of electricity generated by nuclear power to fall below current levels. This means either risky extensions instead of decommissioning or the construction of new nuclear power plants. Either way, the Government must not be allowed to break its promise ■

...and brighter...

Whilst the Government is being lobbied to extend the 10-year Aldermaston contract, some of the highest levels of plutonium and uranium contamination have been found in the area.

Just one year after the government awarded the ten year £2.2 billion Atomic Weapons Establishment contract at Aldermaston to a joint venture between BNFL, AWE Management, Serco and Lockheed Martin, the consortium is lobbying for an extension of 15 years. Whilst Aldermaston's job is to maintain Britain's current nuclear deterrent (carried abroad the Trident submarines) and to ensure the capacity to develop new deterrents, some of the highest levels of plutonium and uranium contamination have been found in a suburb within 20 miles of both Aldermaston and an MOD site in Burghfield, where nuclear weapons are assembled.

The tests were prompted by an ill resident who, according to his doctor, is suffering from radiation poisoning. Of the three samples taken – one from his house and two from his garden – the house sample gave the highest reading for plutonium isotopes 239 and 240, several hundred times more than background readings. Plutonium is a radioactive element that does not exist in the natural world but is created by burning uranium fuel in a nuclear reactor. Although the proportion of isotopes suggests they came from a nuclear reactor, not from fallout, the MOD said it would co-operate with the investigation ■

...and brightest

Nuclear disarmament, Russian style.

A Belarussian scientist who conducted groundbreaking work on the devastating effects of fallout from the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster has been convicted of corruption and jailed by a military court. Human rights groups have condemned the imprisonment of Yuri Bandazhevsky on what they believe to be fabricated charges. Significantly, the arrest was ordered soon after Bandazhevsky wrote to President Alexander Lukashenko to complain about the

failure of the government to deal properly with the clean-up operation. Lukashenko, with an election looming this autumn, is anxious to play down the extent of the enduring damage caused by the nuclear accident – an aim not helped by Bandazhevsky's health studies in the Chernobyl region. He found that 80 per cent of children exposed to high levels of radiation in Gomel suffered a variety of cardiac disorders. The most contaminated areas of the country are still home to a population of over 2.5 million people ■

PHOTO NEWS



Spelling it out: Hundreds of protesters rallied on Capitol Hill against Republican plans to allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The letters spell 'Clean Energy' AFP PHOTO/STEPHEN JAFFE

'I share the concern of President Bush about weapons of mass destruction and I think it is therefore entirely sensible that we look at offensive and defensive systems in order to combat the threat.'
Tony Blair enthuses.

Others are less sure...

'The Bush administration seems recklessly ready to either block or breach international agreements which are essential to a safer and more civilised future.'
Malcolm Savidge, Labour MP, one of the 250 UK MPs who signed a Commons motion expressing serious concern over Bush's plans.

Not so surprising; compare the \$1.2 billion – G8's generous donation to battle AIDS and other epidemics with \$2.4 billion – value of Britain's arms sales for last year alone. And the proposed 2002 US defence budget, submitted to Congress on 27 June, provides \$8.3 billion for missile defence, an increase of nearly 40%.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the sea...

'I believe that the minke whale is a cockroach in the oceans.'
Maseyuku Komatsu, head of Japan's fisheries agency confuses cetacea with crustacea – or is it arthropoda?

'We believe we can be IWC members and yet go back to commercial whaling. Our policy is to resume whaling on a sustainable basis.'
Thorstein Palsson, Icelandic ambassador to London echoing an increasingly popular trend.

'There's a tendency by Japan to exploit a desperate situation in the Caribbean by purchasing support for voting at the IWC.'
Atherton Martin, Dominica's former minister for the environment

According to Earth Island as many as 50% of whale deaths are a result of ship strikes. At this rate, ship collisions could drive the 300 remaining right whales into extinction by 2200. Still, if there's any left we could call in the cyanide fishermen.

What's in a name?

The value of land depends on your relationship to it.

Take the sandstone canyon southwest of Billings, Montana, US. To the Bureau of Land Management, which leases mineral rights to the site for \$1 an acre it is known as 'Weathermans Draw'. To the Anschutz Exploration Corporation of Denver, however, which holds the permits to drill there, the canyon is known by the evocative title 'MTM-74615'. If their expectations are met, this place could be worth millions. To the numerous Native American tribes who revere the area, it is known as the 'Valley of the Chiefs'. To them it is sacred and beyond a price.

In spring the Interior Department ruled that Anschutz had a right to

drill there and unleashed a fight as complex as the notion of value itself. When the local tribes failed with their petition to reverse the Interior Department's decision, they went to Anschutz and to the press. Anschutz, probably perplexed by the photo flashes, agreed to meet the protesters.

The Blackfeet, one of the 10 affected tribes then suggested a deal that would let the oil company develop oil reserves on their land yet leave the canyon untouched and the meeting ended with slight optimism but no agreement. It all depends on that other antiquated non-fiscal notion of value, and Anschutz will make sure to check that one thoroughly ■

It's terminal

For the first time in the four-year life of the public enquiry into Heathrow Airport's proposed 5th terminal, it has emerged that the building and road network will occupy the Colne flood plain, and necessitate the diversion of two rivers. Regardless of the risk that the new terminal might effect the flooding of the surrounding Colne valley, ministers still intend to give the project the go-ahead this month. Although the British Airports Authority will carry out further research into the flooding danger, competitive pressures (ie a survey commissioned by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry saying that some 80 per cent of London's businesses are in favour) are driving the bid to build the new terminal to secure Heathrow's place as 'the principal European airport' ■

Delegates from 37 countries opened the 53rd meeting of the International Whaling Commission by turning down a sanctuary for whales in the Pacific Ocean. Here – some peaceful reaction



PHOTO NEWS

AP PHOTOS

Dear elected representative

Let him who is without sin cast the first stone...

The US House of Representatives voted 422 to 2 for a series of measures aimed at pressurising Sudan's government over its involvement in human rights abuses. Foreign oil companies doing business in Sudan will from now on be prohibited from raising capital in the United States or listing their securities in US financial markets. American companies are already barred from doing business in Sudan

under US sanctions imposed on Khartoum. Rebels in Sudan's mostly Christian south argue that oil revenues are used to finance the war-efforts of the Muslim-dominated government and international aid companies are abetting government human rights abuses.

'We should not help foreign oil companies who are helping prolong this bloody slaughter,' said Representative Tom Lantos, democrat of California. Fine and valid sentiments, but a little rich coming

from the US legislature, who don't seem to be applying this principle with the same high moral rigour elsewhere.

The real question is whether all oil companies doing business with governments involved with human rights abuses should be barred from raising capital or listing their securities in US financial markets?

This is less likely – the US economy would probably go bust overnight. For more see www.hrw.org or www.moles.org and find out for yourself ■

The method, involving the use of cyanide to stun fish, making them easier to catch, is on the up in the Philippines and Indonesia, which regions supply about 85% of global demand for tropical fish. Experts estimate that half of the poisoned fish die instantly, and 40% of those surviving the poison are dead before they reach an aquarium. Both regions harbour about 30% of the planet's coral reef, which cyanide also bleaches. Currently 4.3% of Philippine reefs and 6.7% of Indonesia's are still in good condition, says the *Scientific American*.

The sad...

'It's against our conscience to use DDT. But so is watching people die from malaria. It's a horrible choice we have to make.'

Rejoice Mabudafhasi, South Africa's deputy minister for environmental affairs and tourism as a new malaria strain hits Africa.

'They are coming here to steal.'

Hanson Gwindi, a medicine man from Zimbabwe on the Swiss scientists with a US patent on the Snake-Bean Tree.

The bad...

'I can assure you China is going in the right direction with human rights.'

Yuan Weimin, Chinese Sports Minister is game for a laugh

...and the plain mad

'I consider that the plane trees lining French roads constitute a clear danger to the public.'

'Green' Jean Glavany, French agriculture minister

And, very, finally. A report for tobacco giant Philip Morris Inc, found that the Czech Republic saved \$147m in 1997 by the deaths of smokers who did not live to use healthcare or housing for the elderly. So everyone's happy – right?

Scotland the brave

The Health and Community Care Committee of the Scottish Parliament will investigate how world trade talks will impact upon the Parliament's ability to determine health policy. The decision follows a campaign by the World Development Movement to raise awareness of the implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for public services. The decision makes the Scottish Parliament the first to examine the health impacts of GATS, which the World Trade Organisation is currently negotiating in Geneva.

GMOs and the EU

The European Commission has proposed much stricter labeling and checks on GM foods, aimed to win back consumer confidence. The proposals will make it more expensive to market GM products (*News, The Ecologist*, Vol 31/4) and will extend labeling to products such as oils, glucose syrup and riboflavin.

The proposals, in trying to diffuse a trade war, offer generous and dangerous concessions to the US. The rules allow food imports from the US – even if they contain small amounts of GM organisms not approved for sale in the EU. The EU has approved 18 GM crops, but the US about 40. The commission will now try to convince consumers and member governments that 'adequate precautionary' measures are in place to re-open the approval process for new GM crops.

California dreaming?

San Diego is home to some 250 biotechnology companies and about 180 medical device companies with more than 32,000 employees and a \$2 billion annual payroll. What better place than this for BIO (the Biotechnology Industry Organisation), one of the world's strongest biotech lobby groups to hold their annual conference in late June. 'This is an industry that does an enormous amount of good in the world,' said the town's mayor Dick Murphy, adding that the City Council, though split on may issues, is unanimously supportive of biotechnology and in a 'rare unanimous vote' declared the week following the conference 'Biotechnology Week'.

Neither fair...

At the WTO's 'request', Sri Lanka has suspended its ban on GM foods. The ban, which was one of the world's toughest, drew fire particularly from the US, which said that, 'there was no credible scientific evidence' to justify it. Although Sri Lanka said that the suspension was temporary and that restrictions would be re-imposed, it does not have a mechanism to test imports for genetic modification and, on the other hand, the US does not certify its exports for genetic modification.

...nor free

Corn farmers from Mexico's north-eastern state of Sinaloa took their anger to the streets in late July, demanding that the government imposes higher tariffs on corn imported from the US. The 3.5 million corn growers across the country all say that they are overwhelmed by a 45 per cent drop in corn prices over three years. The farmers in Sinaloa contend that imported corn from the US has left them with 2.4 million tons of unsold corn. Imports have increased by 14 per cent since NAFTA took effect in 1994.

Paws for thought

Switzerland has detected the first case of a BSE-similar agent in a cat. In mid-June the Federal Veterinary office in Bern announced that Feline Spongiform Enzephelopatie (FSE) is related to BSE and is a transmittable brain disease. Although inspectors have yet to find the cause of infection in the six-year-old cat, they suspect it was fed with raw or insufficiently-cooked infected brain or spinal cord meat. Add the news that UK sheep may have been infected with BSE

since 1990, and you have to admit, it's a mad, mad, mad, mad world.

More friends in high places

Whatever President Bush says, here's an indication of what's to come... Climate change treaty foe Philip Cooney has been named US chief of staff for the White House Council on environmental Quality, which helps formulate the US position on global warming. Whilst working for the American Petroleum Institute, Cooney played a key role in developing the oil lobby's opposition to the Kyoto Protocol.

What's yours is mined

What does a state do if in dire need of cash? Simple: sell off some mining rights without telling anyone about it. The state of West Virginia has sold the right to mine thousands of acres of coal under Cabwaylingo State Forest without review by other state agencies or independent engineers. The West Virginia Public Land Corporation plans to use royalties for the lease, estimated at about \$5 million, to build a handsome office in Fairmont.

New Zealand – old news?

An inquiry commissioned by New Zealand's government has rejected the idea of the country becoming a GM-free zone. 'It would be unwise to turn our back on the potential advantages on offer,' it said, concluding that GMO's hold the promise of conquering disease and wiping out pests. It did not give details of the conditions, crops to be trialled, or what it saw as low- and high-risk applications. The government's initial response will coincide with the ending of the moratorium on field trials of GMOs in early September.

WHALE (of a time): The true price of oil explorations

The West Pacific grey whale, once believed extinct, now clings to life in Siberia's Sea of Okhotsk. A major US-Russian oil project in the waters off Sakhalin Island is now threatening those 100 that remain. According to Earth Island, the massive offshore drilling platforms and tanker traffic might mean millions in future profits for ExxonMobil, Shell and Mitsubishi but they could equally mean the death sentence for the World's last West Pacific grey whales.

BBC WILD



campaigns

• Panic in Peru • The end of the end of Chile • Protection racket in Canada • Nigerian oil spill • Nuclear nuisance in Europe • Fuming in Colombia

PERU Bar-Barrick

A pulse since time immemorial has shaped the life of both the environment and people living in the lush valley surrounded by the Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Negra. The snow on the glaciers melts in the dry season and the water streaming into the valleys drives the local economy. The local farmers' (or 'campesinos'), potato and wheat patches are fed by water runoffs and each rainy season, the glaciers are again covered with snow, icing those majestic summits until the sun starts the cycle all over again. That rhythm is now changing.

The air is warming, causing the glaciers to melt at a hitherto unknown speed. But for some of the campesinos and villagers living south-west of the town of Huaraz there is an additional factor changing their lives: the Pierina gold mine.

Peru is Latin America's leading gold producer and mining is a mainstay of its \$53.8 billion economy, accounting for half of its annual export revenue and much of direct foreign investment. The Pierina mine is the country's second largest gold producer.

In November 1998 Barrick Gold Corporation, a Canadian minerals company, began mining at Pierina, said to hold around 800 million ounces of gold reserves.

Construction was concluded in a record time of two years and at the record low cost of \$260 million. Barrick is known to be a large, low-cost and highly profitable gold producer. Since its purchase of Homestake Mining Co in late July, Barrick



is expected to have a market capitalisation of \$9 billion which would make it the world's largest group by value in the industry.

Barrick does not neglect to point out in its own documentation that its Pierina mine operates in compliance with the most stringent safety and environmental control standards; pointing to its Environmental Impact Assessment, approved by the Ministry of Energy and Mines, in 1997. Indeed, 'the mine has transplanted approximately 12,000 cactus of two species that are in danger of extinction, and about 75 bushes for reclamation purposes.'

In addition, 'it has an effective social support program and maintains an

open dialogue with the neighbours... to find out their needs, priorities and concerns. Barrick not only has an Education Opportunity Program for its employee's children but also supports schools from the local community... It has even helped construct the main square of the town of Jangas and provides assistance to farmers by 'introducing new techniques for sowing, irrigating and improving the quality' of their livestock.

But, according to Dr Marco Villafuerte, all of this veils an important point. As the campesinos, villagers and their families came into his busy Huaraz practice, he detected a pattern of similar symptoms of illness amongst

those living from the soil and waters close by the mine. Taking blood samples from six of the patients with similar symptoms, the results showed traces of cyanide, arsenic, lead and mercury. Extremely worried by the findings, Dr Villafuerte approached Barrick's local representatives, asking for an investigation and for further blood samples to be analysed in a laboratory – but no avail. He has written to the respective local and national authorities, again unsuccessfully. 'If everything was all right or just as a precaution, surely no one would mind sending off further blood samples to be analysed,' argues Dr Villafuerte, who continues to campaign for an independent investigation to this matter.

make a difference

Please write a polite letter to Peter Munk, Chairman, Barrick Gold Corporation, Royal Bank Plaza, suite 2700, Toronto, Canada M5J 2J3.

Please copy your letters to Dr. Marco Villafuerte, Av Fitzcarrald No 236, Huaraz, Ancash, Peru, or email doctorvillafuerte@latinmail.com

PICS THIS SPREAD: S. ROTH



CHILE World's End

South of Punta Arenas lies 'Cabo Froward', the most extreme point of South America's continental landmass. It's the place where the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific meet and where just ahead a multitude of Tierra del Fuego islands comprise the last barrier before giving way to the Antarctic's icy silence. It equally is a place of important natural beauty and intensive wildlife. It is a place of rest where sealions relax in the sun and a multitude of penguins clap their wings in the warm morning wind. Just a beach further on, dolphins chase each other, whilst a majestic Andean Condor circles high up in the blue sky and when the day draws to its end, the Patagonian Puma comes out for the hunt.

Since 1930 'Cabo Froward' has also been home to a monument called 'Cruz de los Mares'. It is nothing more than a 24-metre high cross, but an important one. Standing there at the end of the world it is a symbol that Christianity watches over even this remote corner of the world. Inaugurated by the pope in 1987, it is the third of its kind – nature's own forces blew its two predecessors down.

There is no way to 'Capo Froward' except by sea or by making one's own way through forests and along beaches, consequently hardly anyone ever goes there. This is now going to change.

The city of Punta Arenas and the Province of the Magellanes are planning to construct a road along the sea and right up to Cabo Froward. This 40km-long road will cause irreparable destruction to the landscape – no dolphin, sealion, penguin or puma would be seen

dead along such road.

The planning officers in Punta Arenas argue that the road will be beneficial to tourism; that the cross is important to the region's history and that access to it will enhance tourist's understanding of both regional tradition and nature. Whilst a good number of the affected

This road will cause irreparable destruction – no dolphin, sealion, penguin or puma would be seen dead there

wildlife species are endangered, the officers argue that there is plenty more unspoiled land for the animals. What's more, they argue that the road will be unpaved; that this is a 10 year project and that so far only the first 10km have been given the go-ahead. The fact is, though, that irreversible and unnecessary destruction to the

flora and fauna will be caused; whether a road is paved or not. In addition, how would tourism (and the town of Punta Arenas) benefit from a 10km long road, ending literally in the middle of nowhere? But the project already is a stage further than simply approved. Numerous corridors of pulled-down trees and numbered signs along the beach already mark the first 10km. Whilst the local government has already given the go-ahead for the initial phase, it is about to take a decision on the remainder of the road. If the second and final phase can be successfully blocked in time, then the government might well abandon the whole project all together.

make a difference

Write to Nelda Panicucci, Intendente, Edificio del Gobierno, 3er Piso, Bories Esquina, Jose Menendez, Punta Arenas, Chile. Please copy your letter to Corporation National Forestal (CONAF), Jose Menendez 1147 Punta Arenas, Chile. Write a polite letter, say why you oppose the road and suggest that 'Cabo Froward' should become a protected area.

CANADA

Logging interest

Quebec has a vast expanse of wilderness including one million sq km of boreal forest; home to Canada's largest caribou herd. It also contains the largest roadless watershed outside of Nunavut. The pace of industrial development, particularly logging, has exploded in the region over the last decade. Quebec's spectacular wilderness areas, significant wildlife habitat and the lands that support the traditional uses of aboriginal people are rapidly being lost. Last spring, the provincial government was set to announce a strategy to increase protected provincial lands to 8 per cent of the province within five years. However, these areas would include categories of 'protection' thus allowing some development. At the last minute, the announcement was cancelled, due to the Ministry of Natural Resources withdrawing its support. After a decade of promises, the percentage of legislatively protected land has only gone from 0.4 to 0.5 per cent, and the provincial government is still baulking at committing to any strategy that might reduce logging potential. The government is about to announce its revised strategy. But environmental groups fear that it will be even weaker, in order to accommodate the logging interests, and will exclude any large truly protected areas in the harvestable forest base. It is critical that Quebec's leaders hear from people from across the country – and indeed the World – that Quebec should establish a protected and comprehensive area network that excludes all industrial development, and that the government's goal of only protecting 8 per cent of Quebec's natural ecosystems is grossly inadequate.

make a difference

Please write a letter to André Boisclair, Minister of the Environment, Édifice Marie-Guyart, 675 René-Lévesque, boulevard East, 30th floor, Québec, QC G1R 5V7, fax: +1 418 643-4143, email: cab.ministre@menv.gouv.qc.ca. Copy your letter to: Jean Langlois, The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, 880 Wellington Street, Suite 506 (B), Ottawa, ON K1R 6K7, fax: +1 613 232-2030, email: langlois@cyberus.ca



6 dot. campaigners

1 www.CleanUpGE.org
Get at General Electric's (GE) throat and make them clean up their mess in the Hudson River

2 www.fabclimate.org
More than just 'fab' – one of the best sites on how to – here and now – taken action against President Bush and his oil-patch cronies

3 www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food
Recent surveys have shown that about half of all UK fruit and vegetables contain pesticide residues. Email your supermarket and press for change

4 www.emptyhomes.com
Rather than destroying the green belt, 'Empty Homes' campaigns for re-use of – empty homes. If you know of any, get on their website

5 www.ilisu.org.uk
On 7 September, the UK government will take its final decision on supporting the controversial Ilisu dam project in Turkey – watch this site.

6 www.pelicanetwork.net/bombingrange.htm
The U.S. Navy intends to send 3,000 jet fighters into a cradle of the Santa Lucia Mountains, California – the heritage homeland of the Salinan Indian – for bombing practice

NIGERIA Shell on Earth

Blatantly disregarding the concerns of local communities, the Board of Directors of the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the World Bank's private lending arm, approved a \$15 million loan in June that would benefit the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation of Nigeria. The loan will provide hard currency to banks in the Niger Delta who are then enabled to lend money to subcontractors working for Shell.

The IFC acknowledged 'problems' in the supposed consultation process around the project and admitted that although the project had been under consideration for the last 24 months, not enough community groups had been consulted in time.

The loan was approved just as Oronto Douglas, representing Environmental Rights Action of Nigeria arrived in DC to discuss the project with the IFC. Douglas pointed out that five of the six groups the IFC claimed they had consulted were oil industry sponsored NGOs. 'They are ignoring our people and our concerns and they are calling it consultations,' said Douglas.

What's more, internal IFC documents recently leaked to the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) revealed that the IFC recognises that this association with Shell would represent a 'reputational risk' to the World Bank.

'What they call a "reputational" problem, we call a consistent pattern of complicity in and responsibility for human rights abuses and environmental degradation. Funding Shell in

Nigeria is like funding Exxon in Valdez – it's just not a smart way to repair relations or engage in community development' said Steve Kretzmann of the IPS.

A mere six days after the IFC loan approval an oil spill and explosion occurred in the aged and rusty Shell pipeline in Ogbodo, Nigeria. It destroyed the only source of drinking water for 150,000 people. The spill has also destroyed community fishing equipment and farmlands, and resulted in fumes and pollutants that have sickened people and forced many to evacuate.

The World Bank is about to launch a review of their oil, gas and mining sectors. Whilst it is not clear whether projects such as this loan to a financial intermediary for an oil company would be part of the review process; it is high time to tell the World Bank Group to revoke the loan and to immediately cease from investing in fossil fuel projects.



Villagers cover their faces to avoid the stench of gas after the oil spill in Nigeria's Ogoniland

make a difference Write to James Wolfensohn, President, World Bank Group, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA. Please cc your letter to Mr James Bond, Director, Mining Department at the same address. Please copy your letter to Steve Kretzmann, IPS, 733 15th St NW, Suite 1020, Washington DC 20005, USA. For more information and a sample letter, see www.foei.org

EUROPE Time for a change in climate

In Bonn, delegates from the 178 countries that signed up to the Kyoto protocol, agreed, amongst other things, to leave nuclear power plants out of the Clean Development Mechanism, which allows industrialised countries to claim carbon credits for emission-cutting investments in developing countries. They also excluded nuclear energy from the Joint Implementation, a similar mechanism covering green

investments by developed nations in transition economies such as the former Soviet bloc. The potential consequences of such a decision are far reaching. However, if such a resolution is to be successfully implemented it is important for it to be supported by the international financial institutions. Now, more than ever, it is unacceptable to let such bodies continue to invest

in the very sources of energy that do not contribute to the solution while the international community struggles to replace them.

To date the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is the only development bank still investing in nuclear power. To date, EBRD is still considering support for outdated Soviet-design reactors at the Khmel'nitsky and Rivne plants in Ukraine (*Campaigns, The Ecologist* vol 30/9).

According to an independent panel of experts, both projects are uneconomic, unsafe and unwanted by the local population.

It vital to urge EBRD to redirect its energy investments from such outdated and dangerous technologies into energy saving and renewables. Investing in new technologies for effective energy production and distribution is investing in a safe future. It is up to the development banks to lead such investments.

make a difference Write to Jean Lemierre, President, EBRD, 1 Exchange Square, London EC2 2JN. Please copy your letters to: CEE BankWatch, Kratka 26, 10000 Praha 10, Czech Republic, or email Energy@bankwatch.org. For more information visit www.bankwatch.org



US/COLOMBIA Going up in smoke

Last July, 'Plan Colombia' a U.S. aid package allocating \$1.3 billion in primarily military assistance to Colombia passed the US Senate and was signed into law.

Amongst its many aims, Plan Colombia includes money to fund fumigation efforts, aimed eradicating coca plants.

Yet fumigation also kills legitimate food crops. Without food, communities must move to new areas and plant coca to survive. The US, rather than funding alternative developments which would provide farmers with an opportunity to grow crops other than coca has been forthcoming only with military and fumigation aid.

In late spring the second phase of the US sponsored fumigation of Colombia's illicit crops started to descend from the heavens. According to Lucia Gallardo, an activist from Accion Ecologica, the formula being used is Roundup Ultra, containing glyphosate, POEA and Cosmo Flux 411F. POEA is 4-5 times more toxic than glyphosate (Roundup) and Cosmo Flux 411F increases four times the biological action of glyphosate. Glyphosate is acutely toxic to virtually all plants and trees, and, in combination with other

ingredients in Roundup, to humans as well. Aerial fumigation with Roundup, in the manner in which it is occurring in Colombia, is illegal in the United States where Glyphosate is considered to be category II (high toxicity) and POEA is registered as category I (extremely toxic). Despite the fact that the formula was not adequately tested, it was approved by the 'Consejo Nacional de Estupefacientes de Colombia.' The horror, however, is not only the high toxicity but also the form in which it is used. Planes make up to 12 passes of the same area spraying not only coca, plantain, yucca, but also affecting villagers, campesinos and their families. What's more, the enriched glyphosate will go into rivers and streams, penetrate into the earth, stick to trees and the feathers of birds, and affect extensive areas

of jungle; thus poisoning of one of the world's richest areas of biodiversity. In late July Kathryn S. Fuller, President of the World Wildlife Fund, in an open letter published in the 'Chicago Tribune', expressed concern about the potentially grave environmental impacts of ongoing aerial fumigation through Plan Colombia.

And it doesn't stop there. President Bush has already requested \$730 million for counter-narcotics aid for Colombia and the Andean region for fiscal year 2002.



WWW.USFUMIGATION.ORG

7 world-wide watchdogs

1 www.integrityincience.org
The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has launched this site to inform you about the links between hundreds of scientists (nutrition, environment, toxicology and medicine) and corporations

2 www.britishnuclearfuels.com
If British Nuclear were open and honest about their fiddlings, this probably how their web-site would look like

3 www.foreignpolicy.com
Some serious stories and theories to think over and question

4 www.scientific-alliance.com
The Scientific Alliance represents 'those who are concerned about the growing strength of the environmental movement and the often illogical, emotive and flawed arguments it uses to advance its case'

5 www.percyschmeiser.com
Let's be clear what Saskatchewan farmer Percy Schmeiser was found guilty of. He was found guilty of a) incidentally having Monsanto GM crops on his land, and b) not advising Monsanto to come and fetch it. Read this incredible David vs Goliath story

6 www.social-ecology.org/speakers
check out this site for event details of Cindy Milstein's UK tour on 'Direct Democracy, Anarchism and the New Global Anti-capitalist movement'

7 www.pocketpresident.com
Need a pesky environmental regulation indefinitely 'reviewed'? Big oil buddies clamoring for a fake energy crisis? This site's for you!

right to self determination and autonomy granted to Mexican indigenous people and its passage was denounced by the National Indigenous Congress (CNI). The Zapatistas have rejected the Law and called off any opening for peace talks.

For more campaigns, see this month's Exchange, pages 62-65.

make a difference

Please write a letter to: President George W. Bush, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500 or email

president@whitehouse.gov. If you are a US citizen, write to your representatives and senators. Find them at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov Express grave concern about the ineffective U.S. policy that focuses too heavily on military aid and dangerous fumigation efforts and not on alternative development. Ask them to oppose new increases in military and counter-narcotics aid; to replace a militarised strategy relying on military aid and fumigation to a more effective strategy like alternative development for small farmers. For more information visit www.colombiamobilization.org and www.usfumigation.org

MEXICO Stand-up

In late Spring Mexico's 12 million indigenous people and their supporters throughout Mexico and the world were startled to learn that the Mexican Senate passed a modified

version of the San Andres Accords or Indigenous Rights Bill. The original proposal was submitted to Congress as President Fox took office. Known as the COCOPA Law, it was signed between

President Zedillo's government and the Zapatistas in February 1996 and marked a success for the first round of peace talks in Chiapas. However, when the then President Zedillo altered wording of the law before it was voted on in Congress, the Zapatistas called off all further negotiation with the government, and the talks have been stalled to this day. Since Fox took office the Zapatistas have called for the passage of this measure as a pre-condition to re-starting the dialogue.

The changes made by the Senate to the Law significantly waters down the

make a difference

Write a letter to President Fox via the Mexican embassy in your country of residence. UK residents: The Mexican Embassy to the UK, 42 Hertford Street, London W1 7RD, or fax on 0207 495 4035, email: mexuk@easynet.co.uk. Express your concern for indigenous rights in Mexico, pressure for the Law to be vetoed and encourage him to not only submit but see the passage of the law in its complete form. Let your voice be heard and visit: www.globalexchange.org.

Is nuclear power a viable

PETER HODGSON AND YVES MARIGNAC CLASH

Dear Yves

During the 20th century the world population increased more than in any previous century, and the industrial revolution transformed the lives of billions of people. This not only raised the standard of living of people in the industrialised countries but it also threatened the ecology of the earth. The land, the seas and the atmosphere are increasingly polluted by effluents from factories, power plants, cars and many other sources.

The result is acid rain that kills fish in lakes and trees in the forests and also affects our health. In addition, the recently published studies of the Intergovernmental Commission for Climate Change show that the earth will probably warm up by between 1.4 and 5.8°C during the

'Already about 20 per cent of world electricity is produced by nuclear power stations, so there is no doubt about their capacity'

next 100 years, and this will cause climate change and a global rise in sea level of about 50cm. There are many uncertainties in these studies, but the weight of scientific evidence is now so strong that it must be taken very seriously. Already the habitats of some species are so seriously affected that they are becoming extinct.

This is obviously a very serious situation that will increasingly affect the standard of living of people throughout the world. Climate change can have unforeseeable effects, and the rise in sea level will inundate many coastal areas. It is essential for Governments to consider what can be done, and to take effective action they need the support of public opinion.

To tackle this problem we must reduce the poisonous gases that now pour into the atmosphere from factories and power plants. Much progress has been made in cleaning up factory emissions, but power plants burning coal, oil and natural gas produce CO₂ as an essential by-product: no CO₂ means no power. It is mainly CO₂, together with some methane and other gases, that is responsible for global warming through the greenhouse effect.

We need energy for heating, lighting, travel and communications and also to run the factories that produce a wide range of manufactured products. The amount of energy available determines our standard of living. People in the affluent European and North American countries use on the average 10 or more times energy per person than people in the poorer countries in Asia and Africa. We should certainly save all the energy we can, but even then we need to increase world energy production about five times to raise the standard of living of all the poor people. If we

do this by burning coal, oil and natural gas we put an intolerable burden on the earth and greatly increase the rate of climate change.

It is therefore imperative to find other sources of energy to replace what are called the fossil fuel power stations. The problem is urgent, so we must use well-tried sources. We should also support research on possible new sources, but they cannot be used until they are proved to be practicable.

The alternative energy sources that should be considered are hydroelectric power, which is already extensively used, the so-called renewable sources wind, solar, geothermal, wave and tidal, and finally nuclear power.

The vital question is whether we really need nuclear power. To answer this question we must evaluate these sources as carefully as possible, and see if they have the capacity to meet our needs, how much they cost, whether they are reliable and safe, and what are their effects on the environment. Of the renewable energy sources, wind is generally regarded as the most promising, but in spite of sustained efforts its contribution to our energy needs is very small, 0.16 per cent in the UK, for example. It is also relatively costly, unreliable, dangerous and harmful to the environment.

These rather general statements must be backed up by numbers. The British government plans to build 18 offshore wind farms around the UK, and estimates that the energy will cost over twice as much as that from a coal or nuclear power station. The safety can be measured by recording the number of deaths through accidents from all causes during the generation of a thousand megawatt years of electricity. The figures are about 40 for coal, five each for wind and solar and one for nuclear. Windmills are huge unsightly structures that emit an unpleasant noise. Similar comments can be made for the other renewable sources.'

What about nuclear? Already about 20 per cent of world electricity is produced by nuclear power stations, including 80 per cent for France and about 50 per cent for Western Europe, so there is no doubt about their capacity. They are extremely reliable and emit practically no CO₂ or other polluting gases. They have an excellent safety record, apart from the terrible accident at Chernobyl, which was due to rank carelessness, and a few far less serious ones. Like all modern technology, planes, ships, trains and cars, they have to be treated with care. The waste they produce is relatively small in volume and can be stored safely underground.

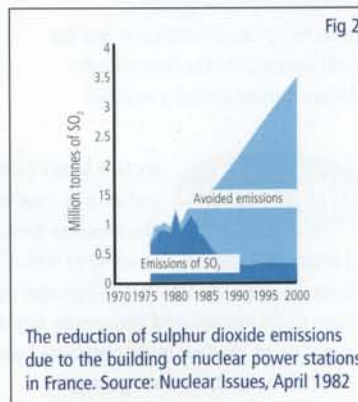
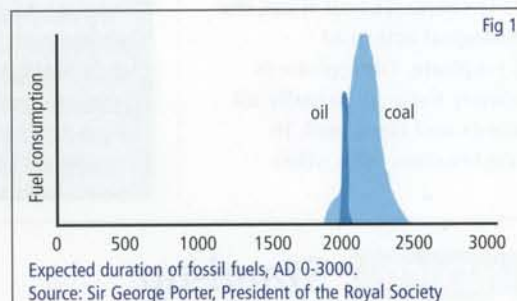
Thus nuclear power emerges as by far the best way to replace fossil fuel power stations that are causing climate change.

Peter Hodgson

YES



Peter Hodgson is a nuclear physicist at Oxford University and has been active in the field since 1948. He has written extensively on the influence of nuclear physics on society and was a member the Council of the Atomic Scientists Association.



solution to climate change?

ON ONE OF TODAY'S BURNING ISSUES

NO



Yves Marignac is Assistant Director of the World Information Service on Energy (WISE), Paris. During 1999-2000 he participated in a study for the French Prime Minister on the economic evaluation of a nuclear option. He is Chief Editor of *Questions d'énergies*, a WISE-Paris project on parliamentary work on energy options.

Dear Peter

Yes, the massive increase of energy use, as a tool of development in parts of the world, induces threats of a new range and nature to humanity and its global environment. This observation is (almost) unanimous; dispute starts when it comes to solutions and policy implementation.

The threat of climate change urges us to reduce drastically our use of fossil fuel resources. Action is vital now, but the urgency must not lead us to take short-sighted decisions. We need to keep a global view of the social and environmental issues. Efforts by the nuclear lobby to focus the climate change debate on the nuclear option are based on an analysis that precisely fails – or omits – to be global. To grant nuclear power the potential to prevent global warming implies some coarse short-cuts, some of which can be found in your analysis.

The most common mistake, or omission, is to seek solutions only in technological substitution at production level: one must 'replace the fossil fuel power stations' by existing alternatives, ie renewable energies or nuclear power. This is typical of the culture inherited from industrial development: the supply, or production, has to grow to meet the demand, or needs, that mechanically increase with progress.

Energy availability is an absolute prerequisite for economic and social development. However, it is not the quantity of energy, but the energy service provided, which is important. You say that 'the amount of energy available determines our standard of living,' and truly, the average North American lives on a better standard than many people in Southern countries using 20 times less energy. But does anyone believe that the quality of life of people in the US is twice as good as that of Europeans just because they use twice as much energy per capita? America and, to a lesser extent, Europe has

developed over a waste of resources like energy.

Energy efficiency technologies on the demand side, changes in infrastructures and a more intelligent consumer attitude could cut our energy consumption significantly. They would reduce damage to the environment and lower the global cost of energy. But this approach goes against our cultural trends. This is the origin of the refusal of the Kyoto Protocol by the US Government, and the background of G W Bush's energy plan, centred on the supply side – including nuclear.

The second error is to consider only a part of the sectors responsible for anthropic greenhouse gas emissions. Nuclear power is limited to the electricity sector, which is itself only a part of the energy sector.

'Energy availability is a prerequisite for economic and social development: but it is the energy source which is important'

You mention the 'factories', but say nothing about transport, which represents the largest share of carbon emissions and of their increase. A comprehensive solution to climate change cannot deal with electricity production alone and leave these areas out.

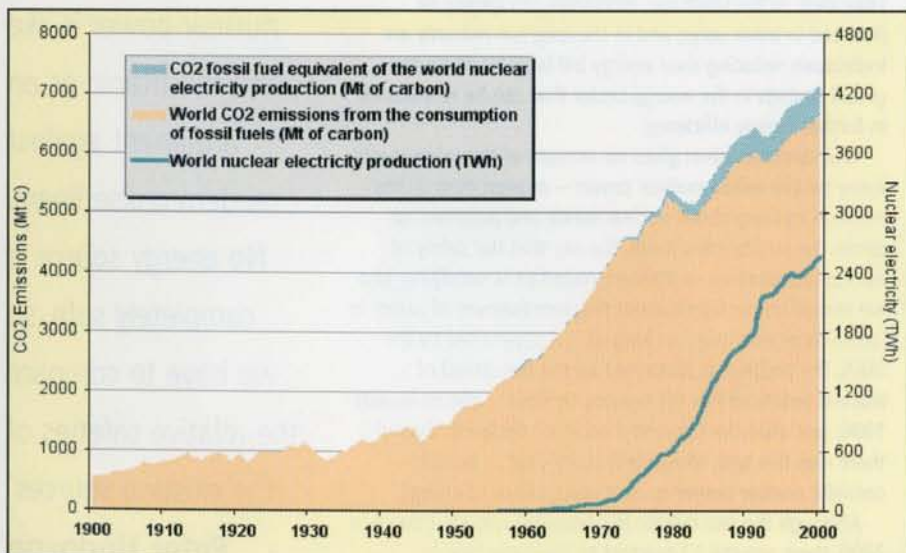
One last main oversight is to concentrate on climate change, thanks to the current political focus on the subject, and forget about other problems. A sustainable energy policy needs to tackle this problem, but it also must seek to reduce other risks – not to weigh them down. Nuclear energy is the source of specific risks: the risk of a major nuclear accident increases with the number of nuclear power plants, the risk of proliferation is growing when more countries operate nuclear installations, and the radioactive waste problem increases with production. These risks are to be taken more seriously than the argument about the 'dangerousness' and 'harm to the environment' used to discredit wind farms.

There are about 438 nuclear reactors producing electricity in the world today, most of them in industrialised countries. Prospects for the industry are bad, with more closures than commands.

A set of countries were able to develop the bomb. And none of the countries producing nuclear electricity has really solved the problem of managing its long-lived highly active waste. Public opinions don't see deep-ground repository projects as a sustainable solution for their final disposal. And in California, where they faced an unusual energy crisis recently, current opinion polls indicate that nuclear power is considered too risky.

Nuclear may represent almost 20 per cent of the

Fig 3



world electricity production today, but it only contributes some 2.5 per cent to the final energy demand, that is the energy turned into service. The actual equivalent of avoided carbon emissions that could be attributed to the use of nuclear power is very low, and only marginal as compared to the total emissions (see figure 3). Moreover, the comparison of the evolution of carbon emissions and nuclear electricity production over the second half of the 20th century shows an unsettling parallelism, only explained by the fact that they both result from the same pattern of industrial, centralised and production-oriented development. This also highlights why countries or regions of the world that are the biggest producers of nuclear electricity are also the biggest producers of carbon emissions.

The US produces 30 per cent of the world's nuclear electricity, and is responsible for almost 25 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions – and still increases its emissions. Nuclear energy is not the solution to its emissions problem, but part of the global uncontrolled development that confronts them with both the exaggerated consumption of fossil fuels and the specific difficulties of nuclear energy (like its nuclear waste management problem). The US constitutes a quarter-scale illustration of what would happen world-wide, should people give way to the nuclear industry's dream of a revival as a champion against the threat of global warming.

Yves Marignac

Dear Yves

The problem we face is how to provide the energy to raise the living standards of billions of people in the poorer countries, and to do this without unacceptably polluting the earth and running the risk of catastrophic climate changes. To achieve this very large amounts of energy are needed, so that world production must be increased at least threefold without unacceptable environmental damage. To evaluate the various energy sources their capacities must be measured, and estimates made of their costs, reliabilities, safeties and effects on the environment. Regrettably, there are few numbers in your letter. Without numerical estimates, it is not possible to have a meaningful discussion.

The urgency of the problem is illustrated by the figure showing the contributions of oil and coal to energy production over the years. It is apparent that we live in a very special period of history that will not last very long. Estimates vary, but it seems that the oil will be exhausted in about 60 years and coal in two or three hundred years (see figure 1). What can replace them?

Even if we rely on coal and oil for this time, they are likely to produce intolerable pollution. Is it not better to tackle the problem now? To imagine that this can be done by renewable sources is to live in a fantasy world, not supported by any numerical analysis.

I entirely agree with you that it is vitally necessary to save energy as much as possible, by eliminating unnecessary activities and by increasing the efficiencies of necessary ones. The problem is how to achieve this. People are strongly opposed to increased fuel prices, and if factories are forced to take inevitably expensive measures to reduce emissions they might become uncompetitive. Without definite incentives, exhortation is like trying to reduce the prison population by telling people to be good. Nuclear energy can

provide electricity at least as cheaply as other sources, and if used to drive trains and cars it can reduce transport emissions. Hydro power is severely limited by the number of suitable rivers. It is of course an overstatement to say that nuclear energy can prevent global warming, but it is by far the most effective way to reduce CO₂ emissions. France (80 per cent nuclear) has halved its emissions and the US (20 per cent nuclear) has reduced them by 6 per cent. In addition, there have been corresponding reductions in the emission of poisonous gases such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, (see figure 2).

Nuclear reactors are continually being improved and so they are increasingly safe when operated properly. The reactor at Sizewell is extremely safe, but one would not be so confident about reactors in some other countries. This is a political problem that can hopefully be solved by requiring reactors to be operated under the strict supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Safe ways of dealing with radioactive waste have been known for decades, but it remains a serious problem only because people have been convinced by years of anti-nuclear rhetoric that it is a serious problem. It is thus essentially a political and psychological problem, not a technical one. Nuclear physicists and engineers have developed a new source of energy that is able to supply our energy needs relatively cheaply, safely and reliably, with minimum effects on the environment. For decades its implementation has been blocked by irresponsible propaganda campaigns that have already added to the pollution of the earth and hence caused many deaths and other health problems. The most urgent task facing us is to remove the psychological barriers that have poisoned public opinion and thus to enable nuclear power to make its true contribution to human welfare.

Peter Hodgson

Dear Peter

'We need energy efficiency – but forget it because people are not ready for it,' goes your letter, yet at the same time: 'Nuclear power is great, we must use it and ignore the "poisoned" public opinion which dislikes the idea.' Cherchez l'erreur...

Your demonstration gives no reason why people should not like energy efficiency – apart from a supposed increase of their expenses, due to necessary incentives. This is a false idea. In the short run, incentives can largely be financed in other ways; and in the long run not only are individuals reducing their energy bill but also there are global savings in the energy sector that can be re-invested in further energy efficiency.

Your demonstration gives no account of the reasons why many people refuse nuclear power – or even deny it. You mention nothing about nuclear waste and pollution, or about the proliferation issue. You say that the safety of nuclear installations in Western countries is satisfying, and we should be confident about the improvement of safety in 'some other countries' as long as it is supervised by the IAEA. The problem is illustrated by the then Head of Nuclear Safety of this UN Agency, Dr Rosen, who in August 1986, just after the Chernobyl accident declared: 'Even if there was this type of accident every year... I would consider nuclear power to be a valid source of energy.'

Although the last reactor in Chernobyl was shut down in 2000, there are still 13 reactors of the same type in



'Using Chernobyl as an argument against nuclear power is like using the Titanic as an argument against modern cruise liners. No energy source is completely safe, so we have to compare the relative safeties of the existing sources'

Peter Hodgson

operation (2 in Lithuania and 11 in Russia). And it is in your country where on the 15th anniversary of the disaster 230,000 sheep on 388 farms are subject to government restriction orders because the meat still contains significant levels of contamination due to radioactive caesium fall-out.

Besides nuclear risk, the key point is that nuclear power is counter-productive in climate change policies. It drains high capital costs for very low results in cutting emissions – mainly because it has no action on, or even reinforces, the global mechanism underlying their growth. Money can only be spent once: the money invested in nuclear power can't be invested in more efficient policies and in other sectors than electricity.

This effect is clear in historical emissions of most significant countries like the US and France – that is if one wants to look at precise and referenced figures rather than isolated numbers. Contrary to your assertion, updated governmental figures from EIA* show that CO₂ emissions from the electric power industry in the US have increased by 20.5 per cent between 1990 and 1999. As stated by the EIA, 'increases in the shares of generation from nuclear and hydroelectric power plants have kept the growth in emissions lower' – in other words they have not reduced them.

According to the French Ministry of Industry**, most part of the 16.5 per cent reduction in French global emissions between 1977 (operation of the first PWR) and 1999 can be attributed to its nuclear programme. Emissions from the energy sector were reduced by 19.4 Gt (billion tonnes) of carbon, while global emissions fell by 21.7 Gt. But emissions from other sectors rose; ie those of transport by 15.3 Gt. And France's nuclear strategy has verified its own limitation: after a rapid fall, emissions have actually been growing since 1987 – and this despite the fact that 11 reactors were put into operation since and 80 per cent of French electricity (but not energy!) is generated by nuclear power plants. Two recent French governmental reports*** have demonstrated that the kind of future energy scenarios that will bring the best results to control carbon emissions are those with the smallest increase of energy demand, and not those with the biggest share of nuclear power.

Yves Maignac

Dear Yves

You attribute to me two statements on energy efficiency and nuclear power that are not mine. I strongly support efficiency, but recognise the difficulty of increasing it. Energy use continually increases; you do not say precisely how you would reverse this. You list some of the disadvantages of nuclear power and conclude that it is not a good way to combat climate change, but do not give a practicable alternative. This is rather like listing all the hazards of food poisoning and concluding that we should avoid food. Using Chernobyl as an argument against nuclear power is like using *Titanic* as an argument against modern cruise liners. No energy source is completely safe, so we have to compare the relative safeties of the existing sources. Recent figures for the number of fatalities per GWe/year are coal 0.34, oil 0.42, natural gas 0.09, hydro 0.88 and nuclear 0.01 (*Nuclear Issues*, June/July 2001). Nuclear is the only substantial energy source that does not emit CO₂, so it is the only way to reduce climate change danger. Opponents of nuclear power may change their minds when the lights go out.

You show a graph indicating the reduction of carbon emissions due to nuclear power. Would you give similar figures for the reduction due to wind power? In Britain, nuclear reduces emissions by 11 per cent, equivalent to 62 million tons of CO₂ per year. I hold no special brief for nuclear power. If there were a better way to supply our energy needs I would support it.

You rely on hopes for the future that have not proved themselves viable, and have failed to show the superiority and practicability of any other large-scale power generator that does not emit the CO₂ that is producing climate change.

Peter Hodgson

Dear Peter

Whatever the evaluation of the nuclear risk as compared to others – we obviously disagree on that point – the interesting part of the discussion is also the comparison of the advantages of the possible solutions. This requires looking for realistic global alternatives, instead of limiting our scope to technologies for electricity production.

For the sake of your demonstration, you would like to restrict the options to nuclear or wind power. The answer to your question about the reductions of carbon emissions due to wind power is clear: they are, for the time being, even lower than those from nuclear power, and it would be similarly limited to a marginal role should we make the best use of wind power resources. Like nuclear power, wind power alone could never solve the climate change problem.

We must think of more global evolutions than just substituting one source of energy with another, or reducing one environmental problem by increasing another one. It is necessary to develop renewables. But the main issue is to develop energy efficiency and rational energy systems. This does not mean reducing the services that use energy but the energy we use for a given service, hence the global environmental impact for a given level of energy services.

Any investment in nuclear energy is denied to better options. As the champion of nuclear power, France can hardly develop renewables or energy efficiency because of a very centralised electric grid, with large-scale power plants.

Nuclear power does not prevent industrialised countries from increasing their emissions. In Bonn the international community decided that developing nuclear power in the South or in Eastern Europe was not a way of respecting their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. Surely this is a clear sign that specific risks and adverse systemic effects rule out nuclear power as a global solution to combat climate change.

Yves Maignac

* For a detailed account, see *Nuclear Power, Energy and the Environment* by P E Hodgson, Imperial College Press, 1999.

* Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the US 1999 – EIA, October 2000

**Data from Observatoire de l'énergie, DGEMP, 2000.

***Boisson, P (Dir), *Énergie 2010-2020, Commissariat général du Plan, 1998. And: Charpin, J M, Dessus, B, Pellat, R, Report to the Prime Minister – Economic Forecast Study of the Nuclear Power Option, Commissariat général du Plan, 2000.*

www.plan.gouv.fr/organisation/seeat/nucleaire/rapporta_ngl.pdf




'Besides nuclear risk, the key point is that nuclear power is counter-productive in climate change policies. It drains high capital costs for very low results in cutting emissions – mainly because it has no action on, or even reinforces, the global mechanism underlying their growth'

Yves Maignac

profile

Individuals can and do make a difference.
But are they heroes or zeroes?

DAVID SUZUKI



He's a genetic scientist and he writes children's books. Sounds scary doesn't he? Fortunately, in a rare moment of cosmic justice, nothing could be further from the truth. David Suzuki may have spent most of his life staring down an electron microscope, but his grasp of the bigger picture gives one faith that the 'wicked scientist' paradigm does not always hold true. Rather Suzuki sees the root of the world's problems as lying within the disciplines of science. He believes that ever since the discoveries of Descartes and Newton we have tried to separate ourselves from the object of our study. The result of this, he says, is that 'by focussing on the parts, we often lose sight of the whole – of patterns and rhythms that make the whole quest interesting in the first place'.

It is this quest to make ourselves whole again that forms the basis of the book that can be seen to be his manifesto, *The Sacred Balance*. In the book can be found a synthesis of his eco-philosophy, where he outlines humankind's three major categories of needs – the physical, the psychological, and what separates him from the majority of the scientific and corporate communities, the spiritual. As he said in an interview in 1997, there is another level of requirements beyond the physical that humans need, that is undeniable scientifically, and that is love'. Yet in the modern world what we are more likely to find is the breakdown of love and interaction in the family and the community, coupled with war, poverty and

destitution. These problems, he says, are as much environmental as social and if we do not interact, communicate and develop compassionate relationships we cannot create the lives that we and all on the planet deserve to lead.

But far from drowning the reader in despair, Suzuki empowers those who encounter him with both a sense of duty and confidence that they can and will make a difference if they contribute time and energy to what are the true fundamentals of life, namely a clean environment, nurturing communities and a diversity born from the many different

'By Suzuki's own admission the world does not have time to wait for a new generation to grow up and make changes; they have to happen now'

regions of the earth. The modern consumerist society, Suzuki is at pains to point out, is 'only a subjective reality created by ourselves', and the fact that we created it means we can change it. But, we need to change our viewpoint on many key issues. For example: 'Globalisation is not just about international trade. It's about us recognising our mutual social and environmental problems and our mutual rights and duties to each other as human beings.'

Suzuki's path to such understanding began very early on in his life. He was born in 1936 in Vancouver, Canada, where he was raised until he was six. However, at that time he, along with many thousands of others, was stripped of all rights of Canadian citizenship and packed off to a camp, where he saw out the rest of World War Two. Years later, working as a geneticist he remembered his childhood experiences, remembered the fact that he was judged and labelled as a result of his genetic make-up. This realisation made him begin to assess the impact of genetics on society and to consider the nature of scientific discovery and the limit of scientific knowledge.

To this end Suzuki set up the David Suzuki Foundation, a non-profit organisation, the stated mission of which is that 'their projects find solutions to the root causes of our most threatening environmental problems. Then we work with our supporters and their communities to implement these solutions for a sustainable future.' The Foundation's website is a rich resource of information on most of the most pressing topics confronting mankind, supported by advice on how anyone can play their part. But rather than being simply a prescriptive guide, the website is also the home to a range of forums on topics including climate change, fisheries, forestry and globalisation.

When he's not busy with his foundation, Suzuki somehow finds time to present various TV series for both children and adults, many of which have won him awards; to write several books and be a senior associate on the staff at the Sustainable Development Research Institute at the University of British Columbia. Oh, and he's even appeared on Sesame Street.

You may wonder why Suzuki spends so much of his time trying to get the environmental message across to children. By his own admission the world does not have time to wait for a new enlightened generation to grow up and make changes, they have to happen now. The reason, he explains is that the one vulnerability that all adults have is to their children. 'Even the most rabid right-wing conservative bastard loves his children and if you love your children you are vulnerable,' he explains. 'If a child says, "Dad (or Mum), I'm really worried. What kind of a future am I going to have? What are you doing to help my future?" parents have to respond. You have no choice.' There is no point using the erroneous arguments of the oil industry that the economic costs of change are too high, children won't care. Suzuki understands that, by seeing the world simply, children see through all of the nonsense that obfuscates the truth for supposedly wiser adults. His thoughts on this topic are both frightening and enlightening – 'It's like being in a huge car driving at a brick wall at 100 miles an hour and most of the people in the car are arguing about where they want to sit.'

CARL LINDNER

When *USA Today* conducted a poll a little while back to see how popular Donald Trump really was, 7,800 people called in to lend their support for the loveable rogue. What makes that figure of particular interest is that the paper traced 5,640 of those calls back to the offices of one man –

Carl Lindner. Lindner is the CEO of Chiquita Brands, the company that grew out of United Fruit, the 'ruthless buccaneer' whose corrupt behaviour in South America during much of the last century gave rise to the phrase Banana Republic. But, of course, things are different now. Chiquita's bananas may be yellow, but its image is green. Lindner doesn't go around beating people up to get what he wants. It's just not what you do if you're a non-smoking, teetotal Baptist octogenarian who doesn't even swear. In fact, Lindner's a philanthropist – he likes to look after people, especially his friends. And Lindner's got a lot of friends, friends in very high places. If you were one of the privileged 500 attending his 80th birthday bash you'd have been able to hob nob with former presidents Bush and Clinton, be lulled by the sweet sounds of Frank Sinatra Junior or tell the ever-so-popular Donald Trump just how much you love him.

When another of his good friends, senator Bob Dole, had a rather busy presidential campaign to run in 1996, the generous Lindner gave him the keys to his private jet. The Dole money didn't stop there. Indeed, between 1988 and 1994, he donated \$100,000 to Dole's Better America Foundation, \$430,000 to his political action committee Campaign America and \$25,000 to the Dole Foundation, a non-profit organisation for the disabled. At around the same time Dole all of a sudden became remarkably interested in fighting the cause of bananas in the US senate, so interested in fact that the Centre for Public Integrity felt compelled to comment: 'Dole went out on a very long and thin limb on this one. He is not usually that stupid. One wonders what drove him to do something so garish.'

Indeed one does. But then Dole is not alone. In 1996, despite the fact that the US produces no bananas and no US jobs were at stake, the Democrat government went to the recently-formed WTO, complaining that EU preferential treatment of Caribbean bananas under the Lomé convention was unfair under the guiding principles of global free trade. The very next day, the US government woke up to find a \$500,000 donation from Chiquita under its pillow. Coincidence, of course. Indeed, between 1990 and 2000, political donations of \$1,000 or more by Carl Lindner or other members of his family have added up to well over \$5 million. While we're on the subject, another couple of beneficiaries worth a mention are John Glenn, ageing astronaut and now a senator and Trent Lott, the leader of the senate who went so

far as to try to get language into an appropriations bill that would have given Chiquita veto power over any settlement of the trade dispute. The *Los Angeles Times* called the move a "mockery of the government's trade policy" and the *Washington Post* noted that the move would have put Lindner on a near-equal footing with the president.

But then he is anyway. You may be wondering what all this largesse has actually bought Lindner. Well, aside from the rare privilege of a night sleeping in the White House Lincoln bedroom, the award of 1994 Great Living Cincinnatian, and, according to *Time Magazine*, personal access

'What makes Lindner's success all the more remarkable are the friends he has picked up and dropped along the way'

to 'copies of government correspondence with heads of state in other countries', quite a lot.

There have been rumours circulating that subsequent to Dubya's arrival in power, a certain amount of his time has been spent paying back his generous supporters. Lo and behold, within months of his taking office, the nine-year trade war was resolved, with the generally agreed winner being Chiquita, which was facing bankruptcy if this had not happened. The company, mind you, not Lindner, for Chiquita is far from the only banana in his bunch. In fact it represents but a fraction of his business interests, all of which are grouped together under the umbrella of the modestly titled American Financial Group and worth an estimated \$17 billion in total. A great deal for a man who is fond of telling people that when he dropped out of school to set up an ice cream business with other members of his family the first day's sales were \$8.28.

What makes the man's success all the more remarkable are some of the friends he has picked up and dropped along the way, none more so than his one time lawyer and executive vice president of American Financial Group, Charles Keating, now languishing behind bars as the man at the centre of the infamous Savings and Loans Scandal. (Lindner also owned seven failed savings and loans companies). The man's success is best summed up by the words on one of the little gold embossed cards he is in the habit of handing out to people he meets. It reads 'Only in America! Gee! Am I lucky!'

Mugsborough revisited

The decision not to build the Hastings bypasses was an unexpected victory – especially, writes **Jake Bowers**, when you consider the historical and literary precedents.

Of course they'd feared the worst. Experience accustoms even the most optimistic of environmentalists to the taste of defeat. And history, seemingly, was not on their side. Hastings is not exactly remembered as a site of victory and, having lost Senlac Hill in 1066, a repeat performance was what most expected. But then a most remarkable thing happened.

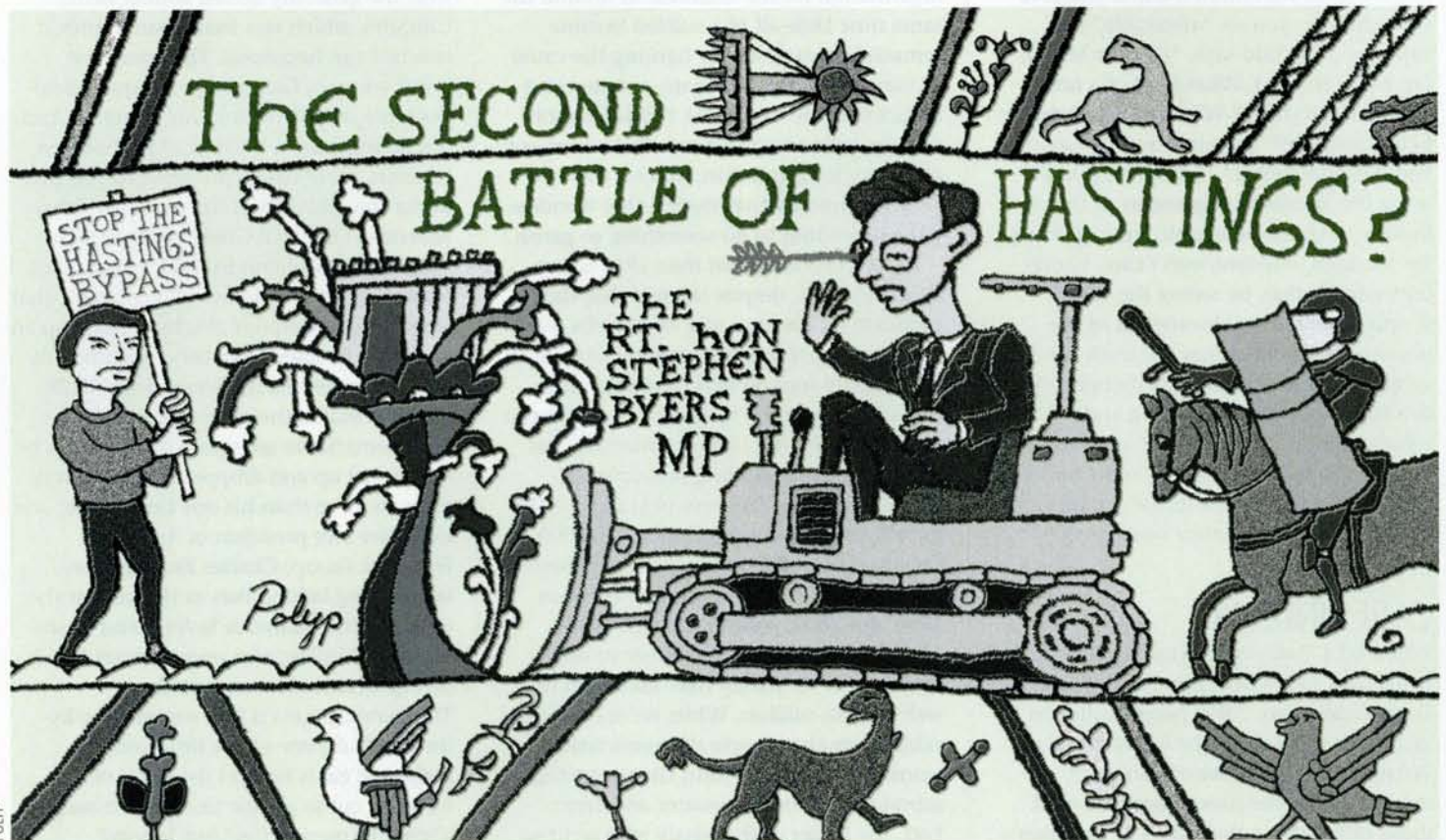
At 12:30 pm on 12 July, 2001 Stephen Byers, Secretary of State for Transport, declared that the Hastings bypasses would not be built. The first in a series of multi-modal transport studies had failed to recommend the new bypasses, leaving Byers' deputy John Spellar to announce the rejection of the proposals. 'The study did not build a convincing regeneration case for the bypasses,' admitted the minister for transport. 'It concluded that although the by-passes could possibly help to generate

employment in the area this would not necessarily help those in most need. Against these rather weak arguments we had to place the evidently severe implications for the environment – two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a designated wildlife site surround Hastings.' At that moment the long overdue arrival of governmental 'joined-up thinking' seemed to have arrived.

It's not just environmental policy that has changed, the environment movement has too. Ten years ago at Twyford Down, when we within Earth First! suggested that environmental groups should co-operate on campaigns, we were met with incredulity by Friends of the Earth. They accused us young upstarts of 'threatening their market share of concern'. Despite this bumpy start, in the battle against the Hastings

bypasses, Friends of the Earth has proved itself to be a model example of a national environmental group. Their support of local campaigners, combined with their ability to build a coalition at a national level, brought about a stunning victory. When co-operation replaces competition the most surprising of results can be achieved. The victory is a testament to what the environmental movement can achieve when it acts as a movement rather than a disparate collection of nature conservation interests.

FoE transport campaigner Tony Bosworth admits he's still on cloud nine after the surprise decision. 'There are two things to be learnt from this victory,' he says. 'Firstly that an alliance between local campaigners and national groups can have a phenomenal effect. Secondly, we won the battle because we have actually won the argument.'



Environmentalists can't win on environmental arguments alone, they must put forward the economic and social arguments as well.'

Parallels

In Hastings itself the news was met with disbelief. 'Bypass Shock' screamed the local newspaper *The Hastings Observer*, which had long campaigned for the new road. In parliament, the local Labour MP Michael Foster was visibly shaken by the news. 'It was the wrong decision,' he told the much-amused House of Commons. 'It may be amusing, but not for my electors in Hastings and Rye, who are devastated by the decision not to proceed. Despite unanimous support from the local council, the county council and the south-east region, the Government has made a different decision.' Business and political leaders across the county of Sussex from every mainstream political party declared the decision a bad day for democracy now that the 'ecotyrrants' had won. The second battle of Hastings, they suggested, was much like the first – a defeat for 90 per cent of local people.

Yet the reality is not quite as simple – support for the bypass had been steadily decreasing, and the second battle of Hastings had little in common with its ancient namesake. Rather, the fight had a much greater resemblance to a fictional struggle far closer to Britain's modern political heart than the Norman Conquest. This struggle was chronicled in one of the most powerful novels ever written, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, written in and about Hastings in the early 20th century by a signwriter called Robert Tressell. As the first novel to reveal the true reality of the subjection and destitution of working class life in Edwardian England, Tressell's book has inspired generations of activists across Britain. It is still the book Tony Benn recommends to left-leaning young people.

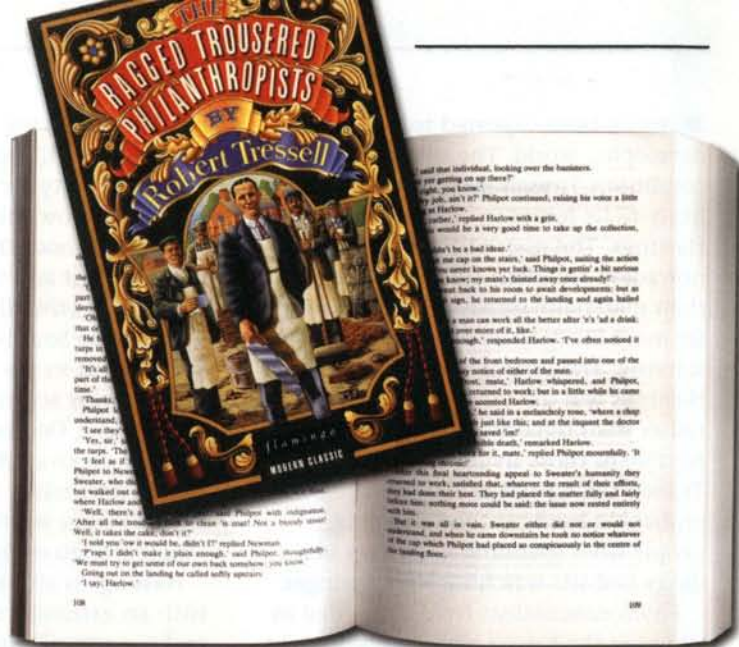
The poverty and grinding deprivation Tressell depicts in the book took place in a fictionalised version of Hastings called Mugsborough. The novel recounts a year in the miserable lives of building labourers forced to live in a state of near-starvation, begging for work from ruthless building firms. They are the eponymous ragged trousered philanthropists because it is they, Tressell argues, who give their lives, labour and health to maximise company profits. The book tells of their battle to survive against the predations

of local firms that through their control over Mugsborough Municipal Council, mislead local ratepayers and dictate the economic direction of the town.

One hundred years later, by challenging the received wisdom that the Hastings bypass would bring prosperity, local campaigners have awoken the wrath of modern Mugsborough and are facing much the same obstacles. *The Hastings Observer* has twisted local debate about the bypasses and traffic congestion in the exactly the same way that Tressell's *Obscurer* did a century ago about poverty.

Hack job

The paper has consistently misrepresented facts about the real causes and solutions to congestion in the town. It has used every trick in the tabloid hack's textbook to work up a pro-bypass frenzy including pleas for a bypass from residents living in the areas of the town most blighted by traffic congestion. 'Give us our bypass now,' a local girl was allowed to plead on page three one week. 'It is only on rare occasions that we can open our windows because of the noise and the smell. Even though I sleep at the back of the house, I can still never get away from the constant noise of the traffic day and night.' It never crossed their enquiring journalistic minds that perhaps too many cars might have caused her suffering. No, a grand, spanking new bypass was what was needed. When the bypass was stopped the paper finally laid its cards on the table. 'Let no one be in any doubt,' it boomed on its front page recently, 'the decision to reject the bypasses for Hastings is a massive blow – the town's best and some would say only hope for improved transport, regeneration and more jobs rested with new roads.' In the *Observer's* eyes environmentalists aren't even to be seen as a legitimate political force. To this day the *Observer* describes environmentalists as 'greens'. The ever-present speech-marks add a patronising illegitimacy that would look obviously out of place if applied to 'New Labour',



'Conservatives' or 'Liberal Democrats'.

In Mugsborough/Hastings, then, the more things have changed, the more they have stayed the same. As the fervently pro-bypass local MP Michael Foster said in his maiden speech to the House of Commons in 1997, 'Members may be forgiven for believing that my constituency is a paradise. That is far from the truth: Hastings, or Mugsborough, as it was called in Robert Tressell's book, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, is still a place of poverty and want. Our unemployment is as bad as that in inner cities: 1,000 young folk out of work and 1,000 long-term unemployed. We have an elderly population of about 34 per cent of the electorate, many of whom are poverty-stricken and excluded from the good life in their old age. Even the solicitors are poor in Hastings and Rye!' (So not all bad, then.)

In that same speech, Foster went on to describe the vital importance of improving the town's transport infrastructure in order to tackle its continuing poverty. When he was re-elected this June, Foster, the first Labour MP ever to represent the town, reiterated his identification with Tressell's work in his victory speech when he declared 'Mugsborough No More!' But while the MP may have stolen Tressell's ragged trousers, he seems to have failed to grasp the meaning behind Tressell's work.

Mugsborough was never just a description of a small, impoverished town. It was a portrait of the world in miniature, set on the south coast of England. Likewise today's Mugsborough is a yardstick by which we can judge how much the world has changed. The worst examples of deprivation have

largely been exported to the developing world. The sweatshop conditions Tressell described are more likely to be found in Hanoi than Hastings. The poor of Hastings nowadays are often culturally rather than materially impoverished. They are far more likely to be obese than starving. The unemployed underclass of Hastings will die from a heroin overdose rather than hypothermia. But poverty is relative to those living around you. If Tressell came back in 2001 he'd probably spend his time stopping people from spending their lives in dingy bed-sits watching Jerry Springer.

Environmentalists have succeeded in stopping the town's wider environment from being bulldozed and tarmacked, threatening, we are told, the town's future prosperity, but Mugsborough's modern band of small-time brigands whose numbers have swelled to include the Labour party, aren't taking it lying down. *The Hastings Observer*, supported by local MPs, has started its 'Don't forget Hastings' appeal, inviting local residents to 'urge Stephen Byers not to forget Hastings following the decision to reject the Hastings Bypasses'. One of their greatest gripes is that now the bypass will not be built, land will not be released for housing development. Yet Hastings has 3,000 empty homes.

Having stopped the bypass, environmentalists are now in that rare

position of having to prove their alternatives will work. The challenge is an opportunity for environmental groups to show they really are concerned about the urban environment and urban poverty. Hastings is officially the most deprived town in the South-east of England. Some wards in the town rank within the worst 30 across Britain on the Index for Multiple Deprivation. Its problems will not go away. But do environmentalists have any answers? Do they have anything to offer the Mugsborough of today?

Hastings is an historic seaside town with an extensive medieval old town and exceptional Regency and Victorian architecture. Tressell's legacy is everywhere to be seen. The local hospital has a ward named after him, a co-operative enterprise centre in the town is called the Robert Tressell Workshops. When the Local Boundaries Commission redefines the electoral wards within the town later this year, it is expected they will create a Tressell ward in one of the poorest areas of the town.

Despite the problems within Hastings, the town is surrounded by natural beauty: to the north it is bounded by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), to the south lies the sea. East and west there are areas of national importance for nature conservation. The town, in fact, is boxed in by natural beauty. Owing to the environmental value of surrounding countryside, there is little land available for greenfield development. The limits to the economic activity in Hastings are quite literally defined by the environment. The bypasses weren't built because the government had been forced to take account of the new legal protection it gave to Sites of Special Scientific Interest under the Countryside and Wildlife Act. As a result, Hastings must now become an example for what the rest of the world should be do – it must generate wealth by utilising its resources sustainably. As such it is a fascinating case study of what sustainable regeneration and sustainable development means in practice.

However, Hastings is also a town in decline. The traditional industries of tourism, fishing



The author, Jake Bowers, was involved in the anti-bypass campaign from the beginning to the end.

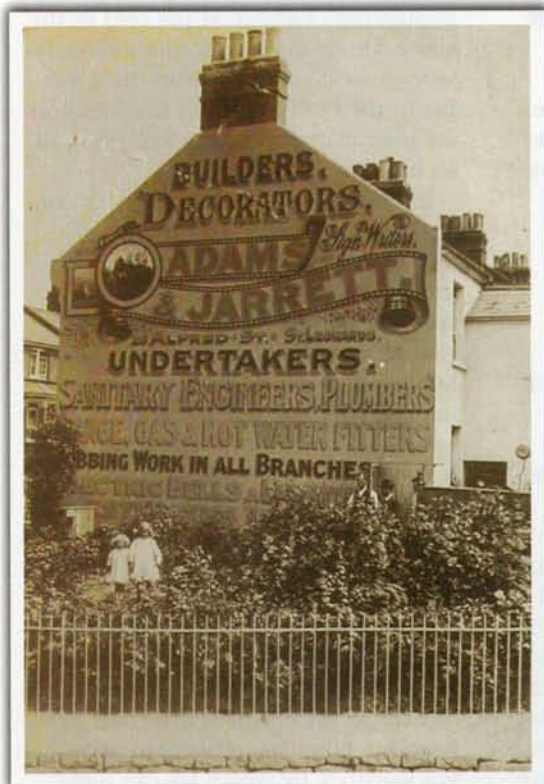
'For those involved in the campaign against the bypass,' says Jake, 'the victory is a sweet moment in what we all know will be a lifetime of struggle. It goes someway to redressing the balance of past failures and commiserations. It will be many years before we stop savouring our victory, if only because we know it may be a while before we taste it again.'

'But victories must not only be savoured and celebrated; they must be analysed so we can know how to repeat them. With the world still firmly on an ever-accelerating course to ecological destruction it's high time we started to improve our batting average.'

and manufacturing are struggling. In its own way Hastings is a victim of globalisation. The tourists that once packed the Victorian pier have long since flown south, and fishing quotas, imposed after years of overfishing, have decimated the local fishing fleet. Transport links to London, Ashford and neighbouring towns are slow. Hastings is relatively isolated from the prosperity of south-east England – property prices are depressed, unemployment is high and incomes are low. House prices are less than half those in nearby Brighton.

Change of view

In early May, Friends of the Earth commissioned CAG consultants to research options for the sustainable regeneration of Hastings as alternatives to the proposed Hastings bypasses. 'The town has great potential,' says Emma Cranidge, author of the report *New Jobs Without New Roads*. 'It has unique assets in its physical situation, beautiful architecture and heritage sites. The remoteness of its location and cheapness of property can offer a



An example of Tressell's skill, Perth Road, St Leonard's. Tressell is standing below the TE of 'Fitters' HASTINGS MUSEUM COLLECTION

peaceful quality of life to those who do not need to be near the rat race. In turning round the town's decline, the challenge is to find strategies that maximise and develop these qualities while increasing prosperity and tackling deprivation – without compromising the local and wider environment.'

Cranidge's study demonstrated that a sustainable regeneration strategy and action plan for Hastings – not reliant upon the environmentally damaging bypasses – could create between 1,067 and 2,557 jobs for substantially less than the cost of the proposed roads. The study presented a vision for a sustainable Hastings community that capitalised on the area's strengths. It looked at maximising the use of brownfield land, creating stronger communities, developing a low-carbon economy, strengthening the local economy, increasing social capital, reducing pollution and increasing resource-use efficiency.

As you walk around Hastings today you can imagine Tressell's ghost shaking its head at the general lack of vision. 'Suppose,' he wrote, 'some people were living in a house. Suppose they were always ill, and suppose that the house was badly built, the walls so constructed that they drew and retained moisture, the roof broken and leaky, the drains defective, the doors and windows ill-fitting, and the rooms badly shaped and draughty. If you were asked to name, in a word, the cause of the ill health of the people who lived there you would say – the house. [But] all the tinkering in the world would not make that house fit to live in; the only thing to do would be to pull it down and build another. There's so much the matter with the present system that it's no good tinkering at it.' ■

Jake Bowers is a freelance journalist, Romani activist and co-founder of the environmental direct action group Earth First! He has lived in and out of Hastings since he was two.

Streamlining opinion

If the Hastings bypass was the carrot, then here comes the stick, says Stephi Roth.

The UK government has introduced measures to speed up decisions on major infrastructure projects. New parliamentary procedures will enable the secretary of state to put a project of 'national significance' to Parliament for debate and agreement on the broad principles ahead of a detailed and public enquiry. 'We need a modern and fair process for making decisions about big infrastructure projects such as new airports, runways and roads,' said Stephen Byers, secretary of state for Transport, Local Government and the Regions. Examples of projects affected by these new measures include Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 (see News section), Manchester Airport Second Runway and the East London River Crossing, a major sea port at Dibden Bay, possible proposals for new nuclear reactors, and various controversial road schemes.

The Government is also looking at ways of speeding up the implementation of major transport infrastructure projects through 'streamlining' the pre-construction phase. Friends of the Earth (FoE) argues that under the new proposals, public enquiries would no longer be held into whether controversial projects such as nuclear power stations, roads and airports should proceed. Ministers would instead give initial approval in principle for a project, with Parliament making the final decision.

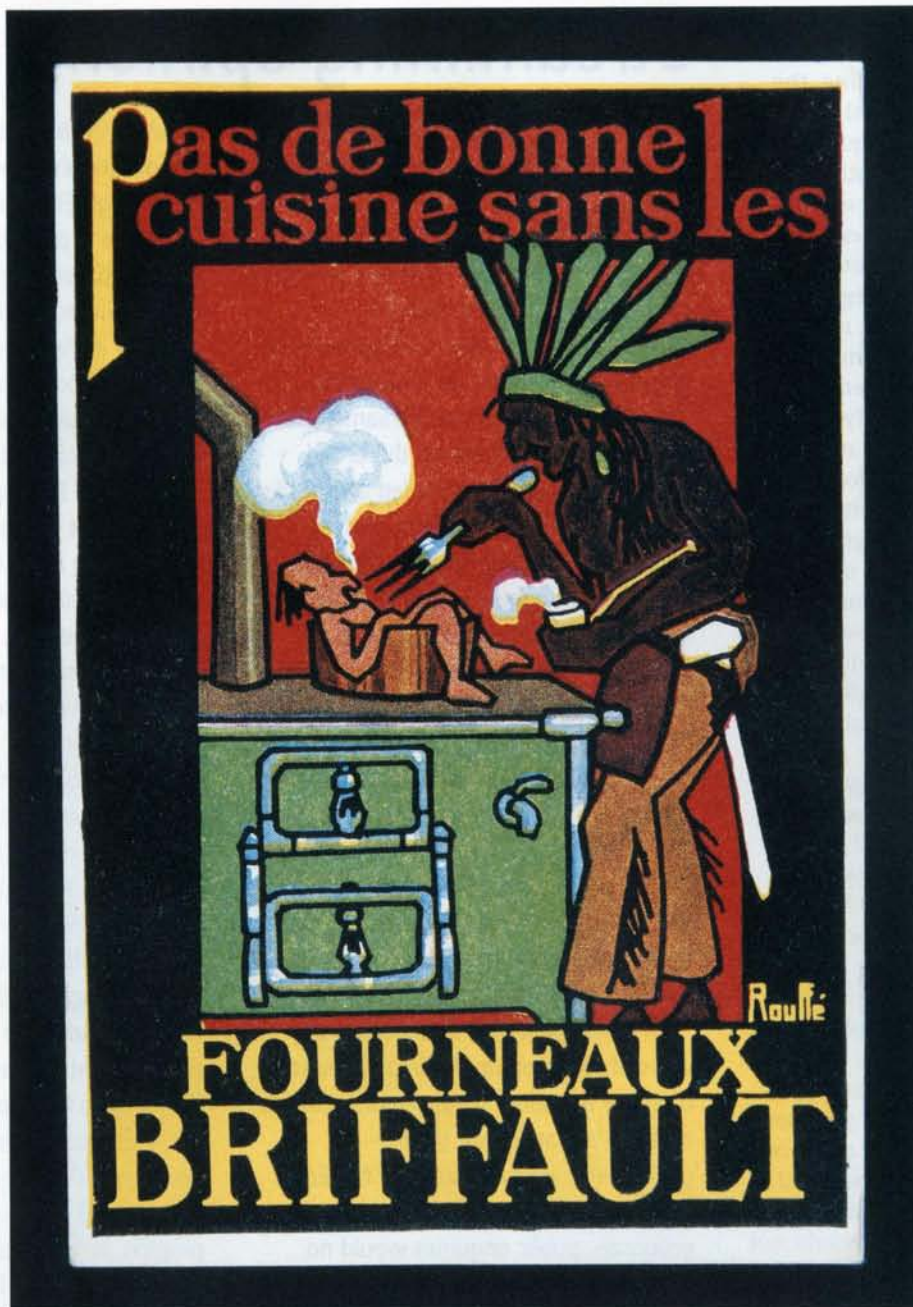
Public enquiries

would only deal with local details, and not discuss the scheme itself. According to Dr Hugh Ellis, FoE's planning adviser: 'Mr Byers is pre-judging the value of big projects based solely on their economic merits. Given the Government's huge majority in Parliament these controversial views are bound to be bulldozed through, regardless of their social and environmental impacts. Indeed one of the schemes Mr Byers mentions as having been subject to lengthy consultation, the East London River Crossing, would almost certainly have gone ahead under his new system. As it was the scheme was abandoned after enormous public opposition highlighted the damage the road would cause.'

'People Against the River Crossing' was set up to prevent the East London River Crossing from destroying Oxleas Woods and cutting through open spaces in Greenwich and Bexley in South-east London. At the European Court the group won a ruling that the Government had failed to undertake a proper environmental assessment before deciding on the project. Public enquiries are a vital component of the democratic decision-making process – however long this may take and even more so for projects of 'national significance'.

Please write a letter to The Rt Hon Stephen Byers, secretary of state for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, Eldand House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU, Fax: +44 (0) 207 944 4399. For more information visit www.foe.co.uk Should you receive a reply, please send a copy to Stephi Roth at *The Ecologist*.





Mutant menu

A recent *Ecologist* survey revealed that 72 per cent of people in Britain do not believe the government when it tells them something is safe¹. With radioactive chocolate, nuclear beef and mutant part-human pork lurking around the human food chain over the years, Eduardo Goncalves wonders why the figure is so low.

This story starts – as so many do – at the British nuclear industry's 'flagship' site at Sellafield in Cumbria. The plant carries out nuclear fuel reprocessing, nuclear waste management, and includes the Calder Hall nuclear power station and Drigg nuclear waste dump.

Most people know that plants such as these release radioactive chemicals into the open environment. Few know just how many.

The box on page 33 lists them, yet we are assured they are all perfectly safe. Each year the government produces a report (called RIFE – Radioactivity in Food and the Environment) that reinforces that notion, yet it is so long and impenetrable, and the accompanying press release so comforting, that it rarely gets reported.

A careful examination of the report's pages, however, reveals a different story. Local fishermen are at risk, it says, through handling 'hot' fishing gear. If you've got a houseboat on the River Ribble you could be getting a nasty dose of external radiation. Trout and the popular local lava bread may be contaminated. Milk has high concentrations of strontium-90, tritium, sulphur-35, iodine-129 and caesium. Plutonium levels in elderberries are elevated, whilst carbon-14 in fruit is 'excessive'. You get free sulphur-35 in barley and wheat, tritium and carbon-14 in vegetables, and caesium, plutonium and strontium on your mushrooms. Duck and beef comes with technetium-99 (discharged into the sea, but blown back onto land), cabbages are laced with promethium-147, and seaweed (used locally as an organic soil fertiliser) is polluted with ruthenium-106. The press release, though, reports happily that levels are within accepted safety standards.

Can we believe them? In 1957, a fire at the plant – then known as Windscale – precipitated a disaster, and caused a near-catastrophe. We now know that its true extent was deliberately censored from government reports in order to prevent damage to the US-UK 'special relationship', and that consequently, dangerously radioactive milk continued to be sold for human consumption. To have done otherwise would have made a mockery of the safety assurances from government officials at the time.

One bizarre and hitherto unreported aspect of the disaster was that a huge consignment of chocolate became contaminated with radiation. Shortly after the accident, confectionery

manufacturer Rowntree discovered that a large quantity of 'chocolate crumb' had been made using milk contaminated with radioactive iodine released by the fire at Windscale. They immediately demanded that the government take responsibility for disposing of it at a nuclear waste dump, and compensate them for their loss.

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) – which ran Windscale – had other ideas, though. It was terrified about the implications if this were to become public knowledge. So they came up with an ingenious plan – pack the chocolate up in plain wrappers and feed it to the nation's soldiers. Or as a UKAEA official put it:

'I think we ought to be very careful about taking any steps to dispose of this chocolate crumb in any secretive way. It would be extremely embarrassing if the Press got hold of the matter and suggested that we were so impressed with the possible danger to public health if this chocolate were to be consumed that we had buried it in one of our waste disposal sites such as Whittle Hill.

'The ideal solution would be for this material to be bought by one of the Service Departments and made up into chocolate bars for consumption by Servicemen in a way which would give no indication of the name of the manufacturer.'¹²

No one would know, and there would be no cause for alarm. By the time anyone became ill, those responsible for the decision would probably be long gone. And most importantly, it would defuse the growing threat of legal action from Rowntree, thereby avoiding further damaging news stories about Britain's fledgling nuclear programme: 'Such proceedings would lead to a renewal of publicity for the Windscale accident which we would obviously want to avoid.'¹³

Choc 'til you drop

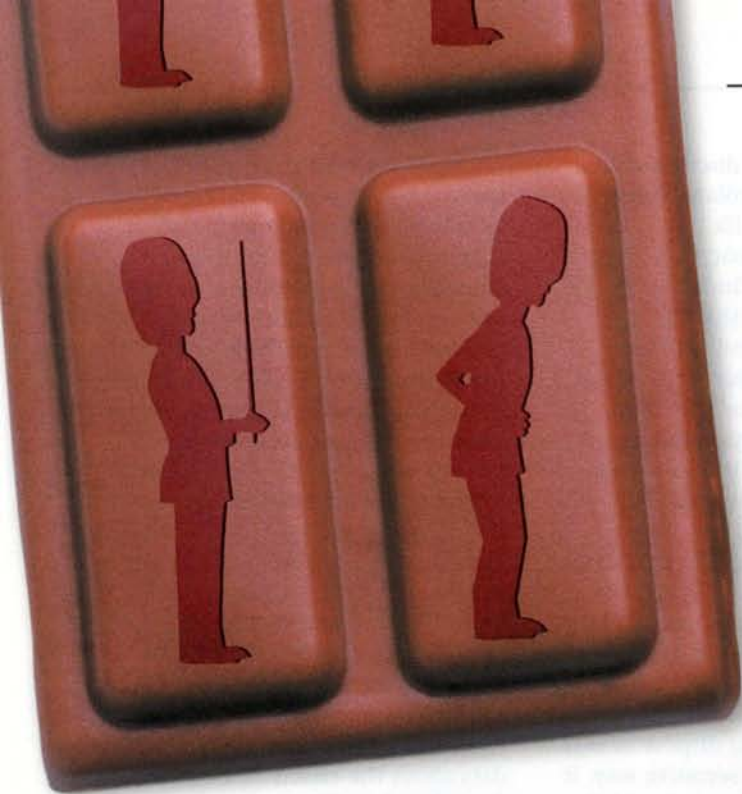
After protracted negotiations, Rowntree and UKAEA came to a settlement: the chocolate crumb would be dumped in a nuclear waste dump. Rowntree would receive no compensation, but in return nor would it become public knowledge that its factory at Egremont had manufactured radioactive chocolate bars – not so much 'Black Magic' as blackmail. So Britain's soldiers were spared the opportunity of becoming unwitting garbage cans for nuclear waste. But have we, as ordinary consumers, been so lucky?

It has long been the practice of the nuclear military-industrial complex (and its cousins in the biological and chemical warfare business) to use animals in its experiments. As well as rats and mice, the nuclear industry has also used larger mammals such as pigs, sheep, dogs, and monkeys. From beagles to baboons, goats to guinea pigs, and horses to hamsters, any animal – it seems – will do in the interests of military experimentation. Between 1993 and 1996, for example, nearly 35,000 animals laid down their lives for their country in military laboratories at Porton Down, Alverstoke and Farnborough.⁴ Hundreds of donkeys – tied up in the Nevada desert by British scientists wanting to test nuclear weapons – gave the world fascinating data about the effects of a bomb-blast.⁵ Or rather they did not – most of the reports are still officially secret.

Some experiments are too cruel to detail here, but the programme raises an interesting question: what on earth happens to all those animal carcasses? The Chief Executive of the Defence Evaluation Research Agency, responsible for the trials, recently declined to answer this question.⁶ One official at the Home Office (which authorises such experiments) suggested that they were incinerated and dumped, but was not sure. It was not their responsibility, she said, to dispose of the bodies after such trials. If it seems a shame to waste all that chocolate, it seems positively criminal to waste so much beef, does it not? Apparently, some government officials agree.

Up until 1985, there was a government laboratory which fed dairy cows with tritium in experiments sponsored by what was then the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF). That establishment, the National Institute for Research in Dairying at Shinfield, near Reading, has now closed its doors, although some of its work has since been transferred to other facilities. Mindful of the limits to the public purse, in 1961 researchers there came up with a terrific cost-saving wheeze – to sell produce from its herds to the general public:

'We have to decide what to do with the milk and carcasses from these experimental animals. Although we would be very unpopular if it leaked out that radioactive meat and milk were being sold by the Institute – and indeed one can imagine a local press sensation and questions in the House [of Commons] – public money should



clearly not be wasted: each animal destroyed would cost £80–100 and furthermore the extra expenditure might make us curtail our experimental programme.⁷

Officials at MAFF recognised that to do this might pose a 'genetic risk' to consumers, but nevertheless affirmed that as far as they were concerned 'there would be no significant risk involved' and therefore that 'on that basis [MAFF] would suggest that the material could be consumed by the public'.

There is no file in the public record which indicates the fate of the Institute's produce. But the fiscal prudence displayed by these government officials – of which Gordon Brown must surely

massively imprecise science that commonly results in large numbers of 'failed' animals. And these, as astute government officials first discovered in the 1960s, have got to go somewhere...

Astonishingly, that somewhere – in the minds of at least two biotech companies and the government watchdog bodies designed to look after our interests as consumers – should be the deep freeze unit at your local supermarket. Government ministers have authorised the setting up of what they call an 'applications system' to oversee the recycling of, for example, pork from pigs bred to contain human genes. Or, put another way, the government considers cannibalism OK for UK consumers.

Genetic engineering experiments on animals involve hundreds of thousands of animals every year. As well as pigs and sheep, cows, cats, dogs and even deer now find

themselves on the receiving end. However, as few as 0.1 per cent of the experiments are successful, and – as BSE and foot and mouth have shown – there is a limit to what the knacker's yard (or the local incinerator) can cope with.

One company which has been breeding genetically-engineered pigs with human-compatible hearts (for use in heart transplant operations) believed

it had stumbled onto a novel solution to the problem of wastage when it asked for permission to market 'failed' pigs from its programmes for food.

Its proposal to sell them to consumers was first considered by government committees as early as 1990. Documents from the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) reveal that during that year, 'two specific submissions were received relating to proposals for the food use of animals' from companies attempting to breed animals with human genes.⁸

Green light for a gene lunch

In its report, the committee declared that, as far as it was concerned, the offspring of animals involved in experiments – including those where 'it is possible that in some animals the gene may have been incorporated only into certain cells' – were, in its view 'normal'. Therefore, it saw 'no reason why they should not be released into the food chain.'

However – adroitly anticipating the

'Between 1993 and 1996 nearly 35,000 animals laid down their lives for their country in [UK] military laboratories' DERA 1997

be envious – has apparently found echo much more recently... this time in the murky world of the genetic engineering industry.

The last few years has seen a huge new business sector emerge around the cloning and genetic manipulation of animals. Heralded as a 'saviour science' on a number of fronts – including health and agriculture – it is actually a

vagaries of public opinion – it concedes that there might be ‘considerable public concern.’ Indeed. Nevertheless, a spokeswoman for one of the companies wanting to engage in this unique recycling programme said it felt encouraged to proceed by the

‘Jews will readily accept the transplant of an organ even if it originated from a pig’ MAFF report, 1993

government’s response. One report in particular, she said, appeared to give a green light.

The report in question, *The Ethics of Genetic Modification and Food Use*, is an educative read. It establishes its credentials to grapple with such sensitive issues early on when it asserts that members of the Jewish community were unlikely to find fault with these foodstuffs. Its reasons included the fact that ‘Jews will readily accept the transplant of an organ even if it originated from a pig.’⁷⁹ On the niggling question of how to offset the costs of failure incurred by gene-manipulation companies, it sympathises with their plight and declares: ‘The farm animals or other food organisms so produced should be used as food rather than discarded needlessly.’ The report was followed up by another from the ACNFP (remember: this is the government-appointed ‘watchdog’ body) which reiterated its view that ‘to release these animals into the food chain did not raise any particular food safety or ethical concerns.’¹⁰

In fact, the law in Britain already allows for the recycling of animals used in (non-genetic) experiments into the human food chain (a fact confirmed by the Home Office press office). Under Section 14 of the Animal Scientific Procedures Act 1986, animals licensed to take part in experiments may be ‘released’ from the Act so that they can be ‘re-used’. So, what the heck – why not GM pigs and sheep, or at least their offspring?

Labelling liability

Well, the problem – according to the ACNFP – is the consumer. In order to respect the rather tiresome demand of shoppers that they should be able to make an informed selection, food containing any ‘ethically sensitive copy

genes’ – in other words, human genes – should preferably be labelled. Its recommendation was passed to another committee, the Food Advisory Committee (FAC). The latter committee – although inexplicably less enthusiastic about the prospect of promoting part-human burgers to discerning shoppers – accepted the ACNFP’s ‘safety assessment’ and suggested that such ‘food should be clearly labelled’. Moreover, it added: ‘The Committee [the ACNFP, that is] would need to consider the form of labelling which might apply in these circumstances.’¹¹

Readers’ suggestions would be appreciated.

Relax. There’s no need to post them – yet. The company breeding pigs with human-compatible hearts (perhaps unsurprisingly) withdrew its application at this point, and before its demise officials at MAFF told me that ‘to date, no genetically modified large farm animal’ has yet entered the food chain.

Hang on a minute... why was the official so careful with his choice of words? Hardly grounds for reassurance. Neither is the fact that the approvals procedure for such applications remains in place, and that the ACNFP could therefore in theory permit ‘the use of a GM animal for use in the human food chain’.¹²

Ready steady crook...

In fact, in the complex world of government food safety committees, it emerges that the ACNFP is not the only body ready to swallow the unthinkable (or allow us to do so). Another supposed watchdog body, the Advisory Committee on Releases into the Environment (ACRE), has also been authorised to ‘undertake, as appropriate, case by case assessment of deliberate release or marketing applications for genetically modified animals.’¹³

The government’s open-minded approach to spawning a new genre of recipe books is sadly not matched by its attitude to naming its real authors, the biotech corporations. When asked to identify the companies that had approached it, a government spokesman sniffed: ‘all information submitted to the ACNFP is treated as commercially confidential until such time as Agriculture and Heath Ministers give food safety clearance to a product. We are therefore unable to release the names of the Companies who submitted these

Shop&drop

If you’re cooking a killer concoction or a rustling up a radioactive repast, get down to the environment around Sellafield and fill up your shopping basket for free!

Into the atmosphere go wastes such as: tritium, carbon-14, sulphur-35, argon-41, krypton-85, cobalt-60, strontium-90, ruthenium-106, antimony-125, iodine-129 and 131, caesium-134 and 137, plutonium-239, 240 and 241, americium-241 and curium-242.

Into the sea and river goes a cocktail even longer in the listing: tritium, carbon-14, sulphur-35, manganese-54, iron-55, cobalt-60, nickel-63, zinc-65, strontium-89 and 90, zirconium-95, niobium-95, technetium-99, ruthenium-103 and 106, silver-110m, antimony-125, iodine-129, caesium-134 and 137, cerium-144, promethium-147, europium-152, 154 and 155, neptunium-237, plutonium-239, 240 and 241, americium-241, curium-242, 243 and 244, and uranium.

proposals.’¹⁴

Happily, however, *The Ecologist* has received written confirmation from one of the companies that it was they who had sought to make a unique contribution to British cuisine. We have chosen not to name them here, partly for legal reasons, and partly because we would not want to deflect attention from the courageous contribution made by government officials paid by taxpayers to make things easier for powerful corporations, regardless of the consequences to the consumer. Plus this article should have given you enough of the how for you to work out for yourself the who...

But why? Just what drives corporations and governments to come up with such abominable schemes which are so obviously bound to cause howls of outrage? Is it all part of some dark global conspiracy? I don’t think so. Is it a sado-masochistic desire for vilification? Hmm. Or is it, quite simply, that they are certain they can get away with it? ■

Eduardo Goncalves lives in Portugal, and grows his own food. His new column, Sick Century, which will bring abominations such as the above to light, begins next month in The Ecologist.

Borneo

to be wild

Robbie Ali examines the plight of the orangutan and the Dayak people, Borneo's ancient inhabitants threatened by economic and social upheaval.

One summer day when I was thirteen, I went alone to the Pittsburgh Zoo. There, at what they called the Monkey House, I saw behind bars two of the great apes. In one cage, inside the building, there was a huge, dazed gorilla standing in the stale air, surrounded by puddles of his own vomit. I was saddened, sick myself. I felt sorry, but did not quite connect.

In another cage, I saw a male orangutan. He was sitting, slowly eating a Fudgesicle.

In Indonesian, 'orangutan' means 'man of the forest', and there truly is something hauntingly human about these unusual animals. He was reflective, strange, and gorgeous sitting there, concentrated, like an ancient Daoist monk, an amorphous chair-like lump, covered with long down-flowing shaggy orange hair, his bearded face surrounded by a pair of great round cheek flaps. In his eyes I thought I saw kindness, wisdom, introspection, peace. There was something magical, strange, and yet more real about him than any human being could ever be to my 13-year-old self.

I felt fascination, awe. I guess I felt love. I stood and watched him for a long time. I longed to communicate, but he did not look at me. I took his picture, and although it was a little blurry I enlarged it, framed it, and kept it on my desk for years.

The fine line between man and ape

Orangutans once ranged over most of Southeast Asia in populations numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Today, a total of less than 20,000 remain. In the wild, they exist only in Borneo (Sarawak, Sabah, and Kalimantan) and in Sumatra, also in Indonesia. They are an endangered species, the principal threats to their survival being habitat loss from rainforest destruction, poaching, and the illegal pet trade. Some experts have

estimated that in the absence of major protective measures they will be extinct in 50 years.

Recent advances in research on the intelligence of the great apes have given a clearer picture of orangutan intellectual capability. Generally more solitary and retiring than the other great apes, they vie with the gorilla, chimpanzee, dolphin, and whale for the title of 'most intelligent non-human animal'. They also exhibit a wide range of emotions. Like other great apes, orangutans laugh when they are tickled.

Orangutans are intimately connected with, and dependent on, the rainforest environment. They use arboreal 'highways' and show an uncanny ability to be at the proper place and time to take advantage of trees fruiting over home ranges of many square kilometres.

Studying orangutans, their psychology and behaviour clearly has potential benefits for humans seeking to understand their own origins, limitations, and possibilities. Moreover, for many people, orangutans have an 'existence value' that is inestimable. They are among the 'charismatic megafauna' or 'umbrella species' that give the rainforest a face and inspire much-needed funding for conservation projects that protect many less charming species of animals and plants as well. We may be less likely to cough up 50 bucks to help a hundred kinds of brown beetle than we would be to save a single panda. But we are creatures of emotion as well as reason.

What makes a human life more valuable than an animal life? Why do human beings have automatic rights while the rights of animals are categorically denied? Is it because of our intelligence, or our emotions? Is it our use of language or tools? As we seek to find a rational basis on which we may distinguish ourselves, it is difficult to identify any capacity or ability that all humans possess, but that all animals

lack. Throughout history, groups in power have generally measured others by their own yardsticks, often to prove the lack of value of 'the other' as a way of denigrating them and of justifying their own superior position.

Mankind has made progress in some areas. In recent years, groups such as the Great Ape Project, the orangutan Foundation International, and the Ape Alliance (see box page 37) have been pressing for the recognition of basic rights for these animals. A landmark breakthrough came in 1997, when New Zealand became the first country to pass specific legislation, stating that, based on their demonstrated intelligence, great apes had the right to be protected from experimentation, captivity, hunting, or other human interference that was not in their best interest. It is hoped that the UK may soon follow suit with a similar law.

An island race

Such movements suggest there may yet be hope for the welfare of animal species currently under threat, and the great apes in particular. But what of the orangutan of Borneo? Crucially, its fate hangs in the balance with that of Borneo itself, as the island undergoes social and economic upheaval, which since 1997 has led to increasing ethnic violence between the ancient indigenous population, the Dayak, and the immigrant Madurese.

'Dayak' is the name given to a number of related groups of people who are descendants of the original inhabitants of Borneo. They number about three



END OF WATERBURY

million in all, out of a total population of about 12 million for the island, 9 million of whom live in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) and the remainder in the northern part of the island in the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak and the Republic of Brunei.

The Dayak are traditionally either hunter-gatherers or settled agriculturalists, and they have lived in Borneo for at least 5,000 years. Their lives are therefore closely connected with the rainforest, and they have maintained low population densities throughout their history.

Native spiritual traditions are primarily animist, and the practice of head-hunting was widespread until the 19th century, when European rulers made concerted efforts to abolish it during the colonial period. Many of the Dayak have been converted to Christianity or Islam, but the Kaharingan religious tradition and the way of life of the communal longhouse are still common, especially in Central Kalimantan.

Conflict in development

The Madurese are Muslim settlers from the small island of Madura near Java, who largely occupy the lowest socio-economic strata in Kalimantan's evolving society. They arrived largely as a result of a transmigration scheme sponsored by the World Bank in the 1970s, one of many such projects which have been going on over much of Indonesia since the 1960s. Their purpose is to relieve overcrowding in densely populated Java and Madura by resettlement to the relatively underdeveloped and underpopulated 'outer islands' such as Kalimantan. In all, millions of people have been resettled, and additional millions have 'spontaneously migrated' over the past 40 years.

The World Bank's investment in transmigration projects has been in the billions of dollars. The impact of these transigrations on the economy, the environment, and culture of the 'outer islands' has been enormous, often leading to resentment and ethnic conflict. Many transmigration schemes have failed even to continue to sustain their

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The orangutan – the only great ape found in Asia will become extinct in the wild within the next decade if we do not halt the current rate of habitat destruction.

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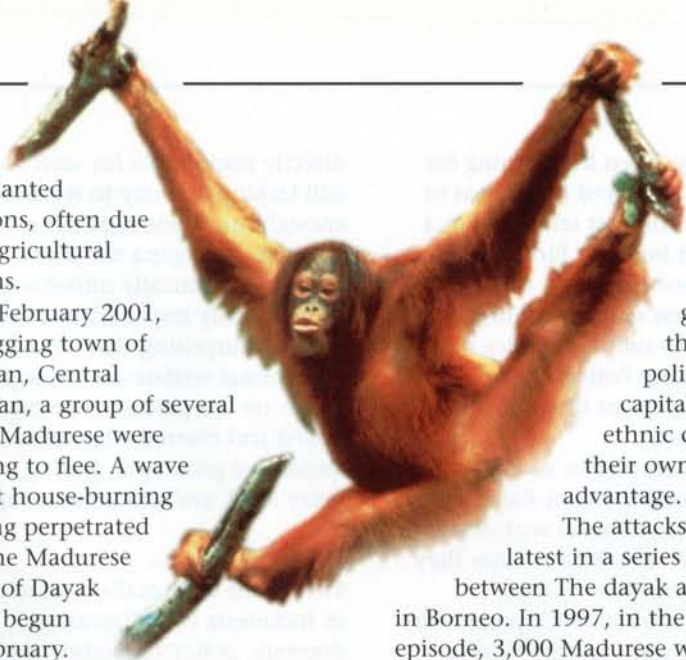
transplanted populations, often due to poor agricultural conditions.

On 25 February 2001, in the logging town of Parenggean, Central Kalimantan, a group of several hundred Madurese were attempting to flee. A wave of violent house-burning and killing perpetrated against the Madurese by gangs of Dayak men had begun on 18 February.

Though under police escort, the Madurese group was suddenly set upon and herded onto a high-school soccer field by Dayak riding in trucks, said to have come from the neighbouring village of Kualakuayan.

Then, at about 10pm, the Dayak began killing, mostly using spears and swords. When it was over three hours later, 118 Madurese were dead, including 26 men, 64 women, 20 children and eight infants.

The Dayak have said that the aim of the attacks is to drive out all Madurese settlers, 100,000 of whom are estimated to be living in Kalimantan. In all, more than 500 Madurese died in the killing spree over a ten-day period. More than 70,000 either fled Borneo or are in refugee camps. In mid-March, another 17 Madurese were killed, prompting the Indonesian government to send in 600



question as to whether certain officials in government, the army, or the police may be capitalising on the ethnic conflict for their own political advantage.

The attacks are only the latest in a series of conflicts between The dayak and Madurese in Borneo. In 1997, in the first such episode, 3,000 Madurese were killed in West Kalimantan.

The bigger picture

The recent violence in Central Kalimantan is a frightening symptom that has surfaced from a deep pool of many complex problems confronting Indonesia as a whole. Indonesia, independent since 1945, is a country with the world's fourth largest population, spread over 17,000 islands. The country's borders bring together people of disparate cultures, economies and religions, with more than 500 languages, over a vast geographical area. Some islands, such as Timor, New Guinea, and Borneo, have been divided between Indonesia and other nations. It is this very diversity, which the government often portrays on an abstract level as a colourful multicultural heritage, that now threatens to cause the nation to disintegrate.

During the 32-year regime of General Suharto which ended in 1999, the overriding goal of the central government was economic expansion for the benefit of the people of Java and neighbouring islands, Indonesia's political and cultural centre.

Policy-makers viewed development of Indonesia's frontier regions as the key to fuelling this rapid progress. The 'outer islands' were seen as untapped reserves to be rapidly opened up and utilised for the benefit of the centre, providing both land for resettlement and agriculture and resources (especially timber, oil, gas, and minerals) for the generation of wealth. Strong international foreign markets for tropical timber also encouraged the opening of Borneo's forests to logging. Most of the gains of Indonesia's

troops with orders to shoot rioters on sight, in an effort to quell the violence.

These latest attacks have purportedly been triggered by the gambling-related torture and murder of a young Dayak man at the hands of a group of Madurese that occurred in a nearby village in December. The killers in that case are said to have escaped to Madura after bribing the police. An alternative report cited the loss of a land case in court by the Dayak to the Madurese as the inciting event. There is also a

orangutans – the current situation

The orangutan was once found throughout Southeast Asia but now the species only survives in relic populations on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. Only 10 years ago the estimated population was approximately 27,000; today the population has declined drastically and recent estimates suggest that it could be as low as 15,000, with around 6,000 of those orangutans in Sumatra.

The biggest threat to the orangutan is habitat loss. One of the most serious of these threats comes from the conversion of its rainforest habitat to permanent agriculture in the form of palm oil plantations. As well as this the escalating threat of illegal logging continues to wipe out huge areas of the national parks.

The opening up of the rainforest has also led to the displacement of orangutans as they are forced to search for food out of their usual ranges exposing them to opportunists who will often kill the adults as 'crop raiders' and then keep the orphans as pets. The current annual rate of deforestation in Kalimantan is 1.5 million hectares and it is estimated that at this rate the forest will be gone by 2010.

As the Indonesian rainforest, second only to Brazil in its richness of biodiversity, is home to 12 per cent of the world's mammal species and 10 per cent of the world's plants, the implications if further habitat loss is not prevented are immense.

Orangutans have the longest birth interval of all mammals; females become sexually mature at 15 and have an offspring every seven to eight years. This makes them particularly vulnerable to extinction.

The threats have increased considerably due to the political vacuum that has been left since the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 and the accompanying opportunities for unchecked corruption.

For more information and details of how you can help, visit:

The Great Ape Project at www.greatapeproject.org

The Orangutan Foundation International at www.orangutan.org,

The Ape Alliance at www.4apes.com



ORANGUTAN PICS: COURTESY OF THE ORANGUTAN FOUNDATION

economic growth have remained close to Jakarta, and 'development' has advanced with little regard for environmental consequences or the needs of indigenous population.

Since Suharto's fall, the weakened central government has not been able to effectively contain political and ethnic conflicts spread over the archipelago. Outbreaks of violence have occurred over many other parts of Indonesia, in particular where transmigration programmes have taken place, including Moluku, Irian Jaya, and Timor. Despite the arrival of 'democracy', Indonesia continues to suffer from over-centralised government, destructive policies, corruption, nepotism, cronyism and failure of infrastructure and the rule of law to extend to rural areas.

Transitional state

As a consequence of these wider issues, Borneo is undergoing an economic and social transition that has led to tremendous negative cultural and environmental repercussions.

Today, the environment, even within protected areas, is in a state of siege.

Enormous fires, due in part to

human activity, often left burning for months, have destroyed huge areas of rainforest over the past ten years. In a telling internet bulletin, Birute Galdikas, the world's foremost expert on orangutans, even sent out an urgent appeal for aid to subsidise police boat patrols of Tanjung Puting National Park in an effort to prevent illegal logging inside its borders.

Until the recent influx of migrants, most of the inhabitants of Kalimantan had far more in common with those in Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei than they do with those in other parts of Indonesia. Economic development has made some groups materially better off, but poverty and lack of social services are still widespread. Deforestation, conflicts over land use for logging, settlement, and agriculture, disenfranchisement and marginalisation have led to widespread resentment in the Dayak community. The Madurese are a convenient scapegoat for Dayak rancour, and government corruption and instability have created the atmosphere of near-anarchy that allowed these massacres to occur.

A familiar pattern

To be aware of the rapid loss of the great rainforests of Borneo, one of the earth's last wild places, is to open one's heart to an enormous sense of tragedy, helplessness, and frustration. Are the rainforest, orangutan, and Dayak the inevitable casualties of progress?

There are parallels between recent events in Borneo and what took place in the early 1990s in central Africa, home of the last 650 remaining mountain gorilla on earth. This region also saw the genocidal massacre of one million Tutsi. It is, perhaps, no coincidence that the great apes and some of the earth's last pristine environments are to be found in the same places as indigenous groups on the fringes of new national societies. It is there we also find brutal ethnic conflict and governments, if not

directly responsible for such violence, still lacking capacity to reach deeply enough into these regions to be effective at keeping the peace.

In such politically unstable and economically impoverished areas, it is also not surprising that conservation and animal welfare are a low priority. These are the places where one sees the frayed and blurred edges of humanity: imperilled great apes, glaring injustice at every level, and inhuman savagery.

The future for Borneo?

The recent decentralisation initiative in Indonesia would mean that most domestic policy (including the collection of tax revenues, delivery of education, and allocation of forest resources) is to be administered by the regional governments. This raises hopes as well as ringing alarm bells for many observers. If regional autonomy really does come to fruition, will Kalimantan be the better for it?

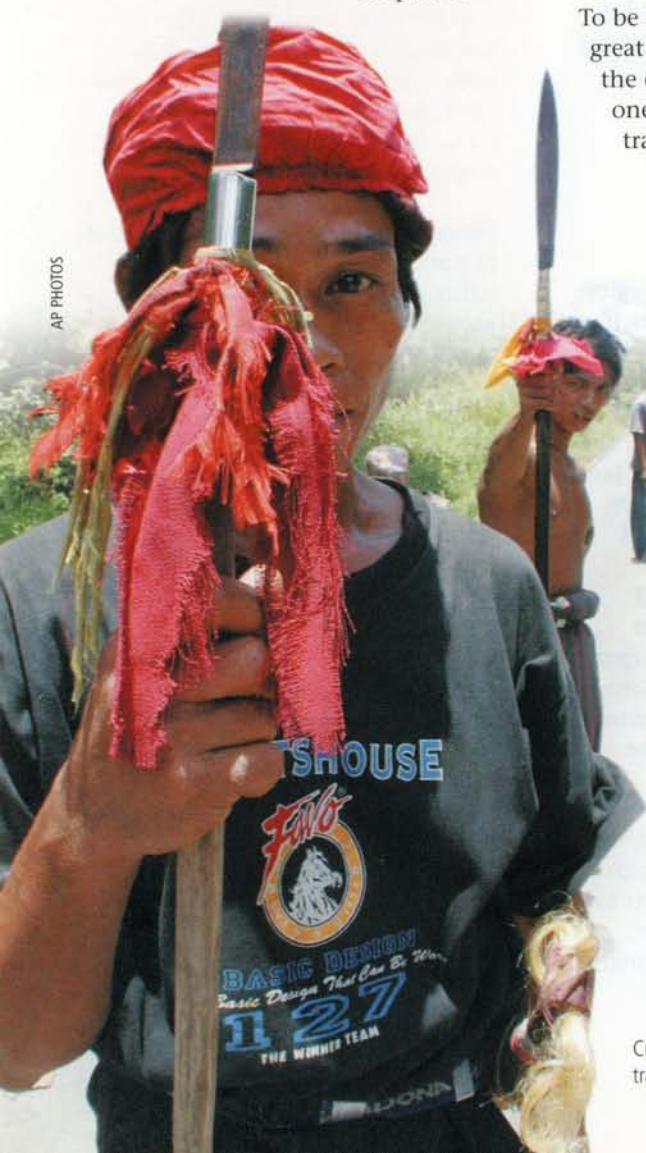
Central Kalimantan is the most forested, least populated province in Borneo, and has the highest Dayak population: more than 60 per cent, a majority of which belong to the riverine Ngaju tribe. It appears to also contain the highest number of remaining orangutans in the world, most of them in unprotected areas.

Here, then, is a chance to build a government by and for the Dayak. It is also a chance to create a place where the rainforest is highly valued by those in control, since the the Dayak have a tradition of living sustainably with it (although they, too, are also known to be engaging in the high-profit illegal logging frenzy of the recent 'timber rush').

But is Kalimantan ready for 'home rule'? There are indications that there is trouble ahead. Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid himself is fighting impeachment over a financial scandal. Provincial governor Asmawi Agani has made overtures to a Chinese logging company now that state-coordinated logging interests have been officially discontinued in the province.

One thing is certain: we will not have to wait long to see what will happen next as the drama of ape and man continues to unfold in this rapidly changing part of the world ■

Robbie Ali is currently involved in health projects including a programme for gorilla trackers in Rwanda and incentives for community-based rainforest conservation in Indonesia. Further reading page 66.



AP PHOTOS

Culture clash: for the Dayak (left), the defence of indigenous traditions has re-kindled ferocious ethnic violence

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**ENVIRONMENT
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It's the democracy,

It's easier to be wise when you're still alive. Nevertheless, the death of the 23-year old Italian protester Carlo Giuliani at July's anti-G8 protests in Genoa was a murder waiting to happen. And happen it did, in the most horrific way. Shot through the head by an armed policeman, then run over by his reversing jeep, Giuliani's body lay on the road for hours, his blood a river in gutters that were made for rain. I was three streets away when it happened, washing tear gas from my eyes with lemon water, and I saw the white faces of those who had been there, flooding past me; escaping. Soon after, I saw the press reports and the angry, shocked reactions of the activists on the streets. The growing movement against globalisation and the hijacking of democracy had its first martyr.

Or did it? Some of the grassroots movements in the South, who have been fighting these battles for years, might beg to differ. Less than a month before the G8 summit, three students in Papua New Guinea were gunned down by police as they staged a protest against the World Bank. Last year, in Cochabamba, Bolivia, two people were shot dead during mass demonstrations against water privatisation, which forced the government to renationalise the water company that had increased its prices by 200 per cent, forcing local people to drink rainwater rather than die of thirst. Dozens have died in the Zapatista communities of Mexico, which have been fighting the 'death sentence' imposed upon them by the North American Free Trade Agreement for seven years. In India, as the monsoon raises the water levels behind the Narmada dams, we may soon see hundreds of deaths amongst the Satyagrahi who have vowed to drown in their villages rather than succumb to forced relocation for the sake of industrial growth.

The killing in Genoa was really the first killing amongst the anti-globalisation movement in the West; the first dead white man, from a 'civilised' country. But the tragedy of the shooting is not the most important aspect of what happened at the G8

summit; it has merely helped to bring into focus hard questions about both the future of the movement, and the system it is fighting against.

The real story here is about legitimacy and power. The legitimacy of the G8 leaders and the iniquitous global economic system they support, but also the legitimacy of the germinal movement against it, which is growing at stunning speed. The power of those in the governments and corporations who are busy enclosing, privatising and profiting from the world; but also the debate about power which this movement must now have if it is to grow stronger and build a real base of popular support.

Stories from the streets

But first, the facts. To be on the streets of Genoa during the summit days was the closest thing to being in a warzone that I ever hope to experience. I was at the anti-World Bank/IMF protests in Prague last September, and what happened in Italy made them look like a tea party.

For months, the new far-right government of media-magnate

prime minister Silvio Berlusconi had been preparing for this. He had ordered nothing less than a militarisation of the city centre, where the eight leaders slept on their luxury yacht, European Vision, and hobnobbed in the flag-decked Ducal Palace. Between 15,000 and 20,000 soldiers and police were deployed, armed with live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas launchers, water cannon and armoured personnel carriers. Christopher Columbus airport, named, with a painful irony, after the founding father of enforced globalisation, was fitted with surface-to-air-missile launchers in case of 'terrorist attack'. Anti-terrorist scuba divers patrolled the harbour.

The city centre was designated a 'red zone', with only residents, journalists and politicians allowed to enter. A 10km long security fence, five metres high, was set up around the perimeter of the zone, behind which the carabinieri gathered, their machine guns on prominent display. The cost of this to the people of Genoa was reckoned by the authorities at 250 billion lire – about \$110m.



stupid

The carnage at the G8 summit in Genoa was a turning point for the growing movement against globalisation, says Paul Kingsnorth. The direction it takes now will either make it unstoppable – or destroy it for a generation.

It was, simply, a four-day police state. Ask what sort of 'democratic' system needs these kind of measures to protect itself from 200,000 of its own people, and you already have your answer. For weeks, some activists had been denouncing the measures as 'fascism'. I didn't agree; fascism is not a word to be used lightly. By the time it was all over, though, I had used it myself a dozen times.

Rethinking the world

The future of the world was being decided in Genoa that week. But not by the eight suits in the Ducal palace; the real ideas which will shape the future were being discussed by a diverse group of thinkers and doers down in a complex of tents on the seafront. And they gave the lie to claims that this movement is all about opposition, not solutions.

For five days before the G8 summit began, the Genoa Social Forum (GSF), the umbrella

group of 500 Italian and European NGOs who organised the demonstrations, had set up a series of workshops, talks and plenary sessions about alternatives to the global economy. Key thinkers and economists like Walden Bello, Susan George and Nicola Bullard laid out their alternative economic models. Activists with real achievements under their belts, from the MST in Brazil, Indian farmers groups, unions and others talked of strategies for change. Every subject was covered; the meaning of democracy, ecological worldviews, building a popular base, reforming the global economy. It was the GSF, that week, not the G8, who were pushing the agenda with the tide of history behind it. But they have a long way to go; what came next showed that very clearly.

Carnival and crackdown

It all began on Friday 20 July; the day the summit began. As Air Force One roared over our heads towards Dubya's official airport reception, to the cheers of thousands giving it the finger on the ground below, the day began. I joined the determinedly peaceful pink

and silver 'tactical frivolity' group as it began its march towards the red zone. Protests like this follow a familiar pattern: different groups, with different tactics, take different routes towards their goal. Sometimes they mix, sometimes they don't. That day, all the groups involved – numbering 20,000, according to organisers – had vowed to penetrate the red zone and demonstrate outside the Ducal Palace.

The pink and silver group made their way up towards the red zone on a route agreed with the authorities. Pink fairies, samba bands, radical cheerleaders, an old man dressed as the Pope, a 'peace car' and hundreds of whistling, singing activists danced through the winding streets. They reached the red zone fences, sat down and sang. A man handed flowers to the police, who threw them to the floor without smiling. This was carnival, not war; not even the tooled-up police saw them as a threat. But if any protest highlighted the split – and it is a split – within this movement between the 'spikies' and the 'fluffies' it was this one. Down by the Brignole station, you could see why. ✎



Black...

There, the 'Black Bloc' were doing their work. Quite who they are is unclear to most people. Even within the Bloc there are divisions about what to damage – just the big banks and similar 'symbols of capitalism'; or everything you can? Only what to damage, though. All of them are out for what they like to think is war.

Dressed all in black, marching what looked like a goosestep to the sound of military drums, the Bloc emerged from the sidestreets in tandem. First they went for the banks. They broke the windows and threw the computers out onto the streets. Then they smashed every window in sight. I nearly ended up in hospital when a masked-up Bloc-er with an iron bar took exception to my camera. When they set fire to the litter bins, filling the air with dioxins and pure black smoke, the police disconsolately fired tear gas at them. Within minutes, it had done its work. When I could see again, I saw what they had done.

Every petrol station on their route was trashed. Cars and trucks were set alight. Every shop front was wrecked – not just the big multinationals, but the small shops too; shops owned by the ordinary people of the city. More bins burned, bus shelters and phone boxes fell. Off-licences were broken into and the wine stolen and drunk. No-one was even pretending this was political anymore. And it benefited no-one but the G8, who happily used it as an excuse to tar us all with their Black Brush.

The real shock, though, was the police reaction. Five hundred yards away, at the Brignole station, around 500 police were marching in circles, slamming their batons on their riot shields like Zulus at Isandhlwana. And what did they do? Apart from that first round of tear gas, they did precisely nothing. And it all became clear to me at

that moment: Berlusconi's show of police and military might wasn't there to defend the lives of the ordinary people of Genoa from the savagery of those proto-fascists in black. It was there to defend the powerful in the Ducal Palace, way behind the fences.

...and White

Meanwhile, down at the station, the 'Tute Bianche', or White Overalls, marched in from the east, with the sun in their eyes. The Overalls were, for my money, the bravest people in Genoa. Five thousand of them advanced towards the police lines at Brignole. They pushed, and they pushed. But it didn't work the way it should. And then the war started.

Protesters rushed the police. Tear gas canisters shot through the air. They pushed the police lines back and blockaded the road with barricades of wood and rubbish bins. The police drove their vans through them at top speed; everyone scattered. It was a wonder no-one died then. Out came the stun grenades. The tear gas was so thick I could hardly see. The police retreated. Protesters captured a stalled police van and set it alight. The police regrouped and rushed them. When the gas cleared, I saw an unconscious Carabinieri carried back towards me and laid on the pavement, his face pale, his eyes closed.

And then, the shooting. At first, the police tried to claim that Giuliani had been killed by a stone thrown by protesters. But when the pictures came out, they couldn't pretend any longer. They'd been batoning journalists all day in an attempt to prevent footage of what they were doing. But it didn't work.

Freedom of the press

It was hard to believe it could get worse, but it did. The next day, the international solidarity march through the city was broken up by police charges and helicopters firing tear gas from the skies. Then came what, in my view, was the worst of it all.

Up on a hill, two miles from the red zone, in a building agreed with the authorities, the GSF had its headquarters. Also in the building was the alternative media centre, where reports from the streets were filed during the summit. Across the road was a school where activists slept and planned peaceful actions.

At midnight on Saturday 21 July, 200 police sealed off the road and invaded the buildings. They batoned journalists,

'The real problem in Genoa was that the vast majority of people were hemmed in on both sides by the fascist tactics of both the police and the Black Bloc'

smashed the computers, beat up the GSF lawyers and raided the building; taking away disks, films, computers and even the knives and forks used to prepare the GSF's pasta lunches. In the school, meanwhile, a literal bloodbath was taking place. People were batoned as they slept. Blood smeared the walls and the floors. There was no provocation; it was sheer, bloody, police brutality. A British journalist was held down in the road outside while two police clubbed him unconscious. They left him in a pool of blood. Bodies were carried out of the school in black bags and on



stretchers. Over 30 people ended up in hospital, one critically injured. Amnesty International declared that it would investigate. The authorities tried to defend themselves by saying that 'violent actions' had been planned in the buildings. I was in them every day for a week, and like hundreds of others – including the police themselves – I know that this was a lie.

Meanwhile, across the city, in the car park where they had been camping and planning their riots, the Black Bloc were left to sleep in peace.

Words, words, words

The G8's reaction to this stunning level of official repression said more about the moral bankruptcy of its leaders than all the slogans of the protesters. Berlusconi defended the midnight raid, and shored up the police lies with more of his own. George Bush managed to call the shooting 'regrettable'. Tony Blair blamed the protesters for hijacking 'democracy', and not being 'interested in dialogue'. Quite what the leaders of the G8 have to teach us about democracy is anyone's guess. Blair was elected by just 25 per cent of his people, while Bush wasn't elected at all. Chirac and Berlusconi are under investigation for corruption, while Putin's presidency was handed to him casually by his drunken predecessor without consulting the electorate. This is what democracy looks like?

And what did the G8 decide behind those lines? Well, they decided on an inadequate fund aimed at eliminating AIDS in Africa without threatening the multinational pharmaceutical firms which profit from it. They decided that global warming was a problem but that, realistically, there wasn't much they could do about it. Oh, and they agreed to launch a new trade round – the thing that most of the activists feared most, and which the GSF speakers had been denouncing all week. The thing that will strengthen this movement more than anything else, as a further wave of corporate power-grabbing forces millions more off the land, into the dole queues of the West and the burning shanties of the South.

'The most effective poverty reduction strategy,' read the official, end-of-summit communique, 'is to maintain a strong, dynamic, open and growing global economy. We pledge to do that.' It is these words, issued Canute-like from behind those lines of steel and lead, which make it clear why this movement is needed; now more than ever.

What now?

Genoa seems to have initiated a sea-change in attitudes to summits of this sort; perhaps even to global governance and economics in general. Even the mainstream media in Britain – even some politicians – are now openly questioning the legitimacy not only of the G8 as an institution, but of all such opaque, global forums.

For the movement, this is good news. But it brings with it hard questions. What was achieved? Where do we go from here? And, most of all – what are we for?

History is shifting around us at dizzying speed. On every continent, increasing numbers of people are reacting against



the destruction of the natural world, the privatisation of resources, and power-grabbing corporations. Increasingly, they see themselves as part of a global struggle against the corporate-driven economic system which needs these things for its very survival.

Five years ago, this movement barely existed. The moment is rapidly approaching for it to shift up a gear, to make real changes. If it fails, the chance will be lost for another generation. The question is: how? And Genoa has thrown that question into sharp relief by highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of the movement.

Talkin' bout a revolution

The first question concerns violence. It is a hard fact, uncomfortable for fluffy white liberals, that no real, radical social and economic change has ever been achieved without some level of violence. The Labour movement, the



franchise movement, the women's movement, the anti-apartheid movement, even Gandhi's Indian liberation movement – were all born through some level of blood and fire. It is a hard fact, too, that the serious debates about globalisation we now see in even the dimmest newspapers, and which politicians and corporations are beginning to fear, would not have come about through any number of polite plenary sessions, negotiations or respectable press releases from blue-chip NGOs. It is the turmoil on the streets of Seattle, Prague, and now, Genoa, which have thrown them into sharp focus.

Nevertheless, much of the violence in Genoa was both self-defeating and disempowering. There is a big difference between tearing down symbolic fences and hurling rocks at policemen; between destroying a bank and destroying a small greengrocers; the same moral difference as that between destroying GM crops and sending letter bombs to vivisectionists. The real problem in Genoa was that the vast majority of people – happy to haul down the fences around the red zone and peacefully, symbolically, loudly and crazily occupy the halls of power – were hemmed in on both sides by the fascist tactics of both the police and the Black Bloc and their allies.

And this is what brings us to the real issue – not violence, but power. ✎

Power struggles

What Genoa highlighted most of all was the division between the old and new in this movement – a division which can only grow and which will soon split the movement in two. And so it should. For only that way can we begin to gain the popular base we need to justify the change we demand.

The old left was out in force in Genoa – communists, the Socialist Workers Party, and plenty of others. Still calling each other 'comrades', still talking about the 'proletariat', and still demanding a revolution for which they have no popular support. They talked of power as if it was something concentrated at the top of society – something to be seized by them, and used in the interests of 'the people.' As if this had ever worked before. As if this wouldn't inevitably lead to the oppressed becoming the oppressors. Along with some of the hard nuts and Black Bloc-ers on the streets, this 'old' movement is part of the problem, not the solution – the past, not the future.

The future, in Genoa, and in the movement as a whole, is to be seen in the growing voice which demands that power be looked at in a totally different way: not as something to be used by an elite on behalf of everyone else; not as something to be concentrated, but as something to be dispersed. Fuelled by movements in the South where this has worked for centuries – tribal people, villagers, farming communities and others – it looks to a future where power is dissolved and localised. A future, in other words, of genuine democracy. This is the new movement. As yet, it has no manifesto and no leaders. Maybe it doesn't need them.

What it does need to do is distinguish itself from the old left, the Statists, the car-burners and the petrol-bombers who claim to be part of the same struggle. They are not. You believe in the people, or you believe that the people need to be controlled – either by armed police, fences and corporate power, or by 'Peoples' States', militaristic violence and revolutionary dogma. That is what separates the movement of the future from the remnants of those of the past. That is what this movement must now, unashamedly, become. If it fails, we will all have failed, and our children will be left to pick up the pieces ■

Paul Kingsnorth is currently writing a book about the new global resistance movement, to be published by Simon and Schuster in spring 2003.

Tute Bianche – an army of dreamers?

From Seattle to Genoa, one group has never been far from the front line. But while the aggression of the wreckers and rioters capture most of the headlines, the only weapons of Tute Bianche, 'the White Overalls', are their own, heavily padded, bodies. **Leonardo La Rosa** sought them out in Milan.

'We are an army of dreamers, and therefore invincible' read one of the flyers. There are no batons or stones, no Molotov cocktails and catapults, nor any other sorts of weapons, so brazenly wielded by violent demonstrators. Instead they wear white overalls thick with foam rubber padding, their faces protected by gas masks and glasses. They lead the procession armed only with inflated lorry inner tubes. By comparison, their scanty protection makes the law enforcement's arsenals appear even more frightening than they already are.

And yet the less-than-intimidating methods of 'Tute Bianche' (the White Overalls) have proven extraordinarily effective in carrying the message of the protest to a wider audience.

'This is not about people, it's about something more important – the world'

Whoever wishes to wear a white overall need not be a member of a political party, nor join an organisation, nor profess any particular ideology. In reality, many of their members share a dislike both of the US and of the extremes of global capitalism, but they accept people with a variety of opinions and beliefs, and demand only that they comply with the principle of 'violent non-violence' and are willing to partake in civil disobedience.

Although Tute Bianche are easily recognised at a demonstration, they are difficult to track down in daily life. After several failed attempts to establish contact in Rome, we were sent to the centro sociale Leoncavallo in Milan, from where Tute Bianche originated. We were given two names – Riccardo and Luca – and two mobile phone numbers. Riccardo was cautious on the phone. He wanted to know what we wanted and which newspaper we represented, and then referred us to two or three websites, where we could find everything we needed to know

about Tute Bianche. We were finally able to secure a date.

The centro sociale Leoncavallo is in the Greco district, a part of Milan that tourists very wisely avoid. A railway underpass, heavy with graffiti, led us to a building, which used to be a commercial printers; it was overshadowed by three blocks of flats and gave no indication of life within its walls. Two men sweeping the floor directed me to an office. There I found four people working on a radio spot for the alternative station Onda di urto (Shockwave). Ricardo was among them. Apart from his T-shirt bearing the acronym 'E Z L N' (Zapatista National Liberation Army) he was not how you'd imagine a militant opponent of globalisation might look.

Pointing to a pile of flyers, information sheets and newspapers, he told us, 'everything you need to know about Tute Bianche is there'. 'We are more interested,' I suggested, 'in the people involved, their...'

'This is not about people.

It is about something more important – the world – the third world, an economic order, an end to neoliberal experiments and IMF dictates. These are important topics. You should write about issues, not people. We are workers, students, employees, housewives.'

An Englishman, working with an Austrian on a press release for the Network of Independent Journalists, pointed us to a few of the websites run by the anti-globalisation movement. I asked if the internet would still be just as free and accessible in a few years time. 'Of course,' he nodded confidently, 'because the more they try to repress us, the more resistance we put up. And we have some people who really know what they are doing here. It would be a big mistake to try and force us out of here. Tomorrow's terrorists may be able to do more with a keyboard than with a bomb.'

After lunch the Englishman passed me a mock newspaper. 'Read the last page', he prompted. The story was the farewell speech of John Swinton, a

former chief editor at the *New York Times*, who ended his bitter summary of the journalistic profession with the words: 'We are intellectual prostitutes.'

I asked Riccardo why they had given up trying to reach their objectives using straight political avenues. We do after all live in a democracy. 'Democracy?' He looked pityingly at me. 'Do you call it democracy when a person applying for the office of prime minister holds almost all media power in his hands? Or when the police invaded this office and smashed all our equipment while 'looking for drugs'? We never have drugs here, I can assure you. Perhaps we should have reported it to the police? To the Carabinieri?'

White is the sum of all colours, as much nothing as everything. The idea of demonstrating in white goes back to an observation made by the reigning mayor of Milan in 1994, who described the people associated with the first centro sociale at Via Leoncavallo as ghosts after it had been razed. He wrongly believed that once the centre had been destroyed, the users would also disappear – an exorcism that not only did not work, it had the opposite effect. The small group of Tute Bianche grew rapidly and branched off in Italy, then Europe and finally world-wide. Today the 'Monos blancos' (white monkeys) of Spain and South America, have grown to be one of the most active anti-globalisation organisations.

According to Riccardo, two main principles form the basis of the movement. Firstly, it is a question of creating something that goes beyond right and left politics, and which avoids rigid structures of any kind. The second is diversity of opinion. There are no obligatory ideologies other than the belief that the western democracies are pseudo-democracies, a spectacular example of this being Italy itself.

The walls of the centre are decorated with among other things memorials to Fausto Tindelli

and Iaio Fannucci, two regular users of the first 'Leoncavallo'. The two men were not even twenty years old when they were shot dead in the street on 18 March 1978, two days after the kidnapping of Aldo Moros. Although there were witnesses and ample evidence, the crime was never 'solved'.

Tute Bianche see their 'violent non-violence' tactic as the answer to these events. In the earlier phases of their development, they discussed the possible use of terror, sabotage and armed fighting, but this was soon dismissed. Some of their ideas are based on the views of philosopher Toni Negri – a proclaimed theoretician of terrorism despite his declared detachment from this, who now sits in prison after a long period of exile in France. This, they believe, adds an element of transparency. By openly explaining their conduct, Tute Bianche want to give the state authorities no opportunity to accuse them of subversion.

Tute Bianche's first meeting with the Zapatistas in 1998 was a highly motivating experience. At last they found an opportunity for exchange with a group from the third world. Riccardo spoke of a close spiritual affinity: 'Neither group wants power at any cost, but rather freedom and the chance for everyone to live a humane life.' Such is the Zapatista's appeal that when they marched to the Mexican capital earlier this year, they were able, following assurances by Vicente Fox, Mexico's President, to move in on a military base and peacefully disarm the waiting soldiers.

Sympathisers, journalists and undoubtedly police informers gathered for Tute Bianche's pre-Genoa press call. While the faces of the G8 leaders may be immediately recognisable, their plans are veiled in secrecy. By contrast the faceless Tute Bianche were keen for their plans to be known.

There, Luca told members of the press: 'We are protesting at the fact that



the newspapers are trying to make criminals of us. There will certainly be violence in Genoa: in the form of eight people, whose decisions may well cause the deaths of tens of thousands.'

I asked Riccardo if there was any truth in the story spread across the Italian news magazine *Panorama* about the planned use of medieval catapults, and if so, what were they going to sling at the custodians of the law. 'Sì, è vero', he said smiling grimly, 'lanciamo la merda.'

A fuller version of this article first appeared in *Die Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in July 2001.



SLEEPLESS IN SETTLE

With foot and mouth still ravaging parts of the British countryside, **Aidan Rankin** explains why the farmers need our full support.

At a London drinks party last year, a journalist asked me when I was going back to the Pacific North West. I told him that I had never been to the Pacific North West, although I had spent a long holiday in California on leaving school. At this, my companion looked at me in astonishment: 'But I thought you lived part of the time in London and part of the time in Seattle.' 'No, not Seattle,' I told him, 'but Settle.' 'Where's that?' 'Yorkshire.' 'Oh.'

This exchange illustrates well the growing urban-rural chasm in British politics and society. Most political commentators, whether they call themselves 'liberal' or 'conservative', have an uncompromisingly urban belief in progress for its own sake. They also suffer from a condition called M25 Syndrome. Symptoms include: a gross, often wilful geographical ignorance about anything outside the London Orbital area; a belief that life in the country is somehow less important or even less real than life in the capital; and the assumption that country folk are prejudiced and reactionary. This is why metropolitan is becoming a dirty word in many rural areas, although the attitude of the political class is better described as metro-provincial, if we define provincialism in cultural and spiritual terms: smallness of mind and meanness of soul.

Settle, to metro-provincials, is more remote than Seattle. They regard the Pacific North-West city as a symbol of the new global culture. For it is home to Microsoft and Boeing, Starbucks and Frazier, all icons of mass consumption and the cult of the market. To global capitalism's champions, Seattle represents the inevitable future. Settle, by contrast, is most famous for its railway (the magnificent Settle-Carlisle Line) and hill farming, both viewed as hopelessly un-modern. Yet the name 'Seattle' also conjures up an image of resistance. The protests against the World Trade

Organisation conference there in 1999 were tinged with violence. Despite this, they expressed the possibility of an alternative, more truly practical economics, which treats human beings as more than statistics, regarding local communities and environments – like Settle's – as valuable in their own right. At the time of the Seattle protests, I recall joking that some activists might misread

'There is an atmosphere of barely concealed rage that makes violent protest a real possibility'

the Internet and turn up in Settle. Then, the idea of riots in this Yorkshire Dales market town seemed wholly incongruous. Now, after months of foot and mouth disease and mass slaughter of livestock, there is an atmosphere of barely concealed rage that makes violent protest a real possibility.

Foot and mouth has politicised the Settle area as never before. This politics is curiously like that of the Seattle protesters. It combines a series of (often contradictory) demands with a desperate plea to be listened to and a sense that something is deeply wrong. Like the anti-capitalist protesters, Settle's angry farmers and businesspeople lack strategic or ideological cohesion. In both cases, this could be a strength, a vaccine against poisonous dogmas.

Equally, the formlessness of anti-capitalist protest and the new rural radicalism make them supremely vulnerable. Without a sense of direction, they could be co-opted by extremists, fall apart or lapse into incoherent nihilism.

So far, the protests in Settle have been dignified, reflecting the traditional character of the Dales. When Nick

Brown, the unlamented former Agriculture Minister, visited the town before the General Election, he was confronted by a well-organised group of local women bearing placards with slogans like 'Settle: Culled By Politicians'. Few, if any, of them had ever needed to demonstrate against anyone in their lives. The surrounding crowd, made up largely of farmers, their families and friends, was in angry mood. There were raised voices, insults displays of profound grief. The media circus, gathered in Settle that day, would have loved an egg-throwing incident. One broadsheet correspondent wrote of the custard pies in Sidwells bakery, near the Town Hall and claimed that the residents had 'missed a trick'. He was wrong. The strength of the placard-waving women lay in their restrained assertion of an uncomfortable truth: that British politicians of all parties (not just Labour) had abandoned them as citizens.

Livestock – especially sheep – farming is the staple of the local economy. As in most of upland Britain, the farms are mostly small-scale, family-owned and run. In the Settle area, farming is more than a living. Unlike the urban 'career', it allows for continuity between generations. It preserves a culture based on individual liberty, along with a wider freedom from big business and the State. Farming gives character to many pub or café, frequented by urban walkers at weekends. It underpins the tourist industry, also disastrously affected by foot and mouth. Tourists come to the Dales to experience a living, working countryside, not a theme park or a suburban monoculture.

Because they are based on liberty, the values of hill farming communities like Settle conflict with the one-size-fits-all Political Correctness of New Labour especially, but also many of the politicians calling themselves 'Liberal' or 'Conservative'. To the Blairite mindset,

country folk are dangerously independent. They reject fashionable ideological fads, hate bureaucrats, believe that governments are usually up to no good and believe in local decision-making rather than edicts from Whitehall or (worse still) Brussels. Worst of all for New Labour, rural communities represent genuine cultural diversity, a rebuke to the failing but ever more repressive regime of State 'multiculturalism'. For the past four years, the rural population of Britain has been treated as a troublesome indigenous minority. It has been subject to a *Kulturkampf* by urban pseudo-liberals, the hypocrisy of which is often breath-taking. Hunting is condemned on animal welfare grounds, but laboratories where dogs are tortured sadistically for 'medical science' are actively championed. In the name of 'safety', shooters' rights are restricted and countrymen who defend themselves against burglars sent to jail – but murderous terrorists are granted early release. Country folk believe their way of life is under attack and that their ancient freedoms are being systematically stripped away.

Foot and mouth came to Settle relatively late in the epidemic, in time to destroy the vital tourist season. Farming families have been devastated by the mass slaughter of affected livestock and by the now notorious policy of 'contiguous culling' – the slaughter of neighbouring herds. This devastation is personal as well as economic. Most hill farmers know their livestock (including their family histories) and think of them as individuals rather than commodities. An eerie emptiness has arisen from the sudden absence of livestock. There are no sheep on Castleberg, the hill that overlooks Settle. Their noise no longer drowns out the sound of birds. Fields are fast turning into meadows as the contract between man and beast is voided by urban bureaucrats.

In Yorkshire's Culling Fields, economic ruin combines with personal grief. Proud men fight to hold back tears of sadness and rage – sadness at the terrible waste of healthy animals, rage at a government that refuses to listen to them. At times in the past month, Settle looked like a town under armed occupation, as the roads clog with Army Land Rovers and the pubs fill with soldiers seconded to help

with the culling. The people of Settle like the soldiers, however, for they are friendly, well-behaved young men who feel a justified distaste for their present task. They did not join the Army to slaughter lambs or restrain distressed farmers. Likewise, many slaughtermen are farm workers trying to make ends meet. Settle, like most foot and mouth areas, is in the grip of a rural recession. The National Park is closed and so all but the most dedicated walkers (and pub-crawlers) stay away. Shops and small businesses struggle to keep from going under. Their stories belie the 'feel-good' propaganda of the metro-provincials.

Economic fear and a sense of cultural siege create a climate in which

'Ecologists should side with farmers against big business'

conspiracy theories thrive. Yorkshiremen pride themselves on their level heads. This makes more frightening their ready acceptance of fanciful rumours, fuelling local anger and alienation from politics. In pubs, shops and cafes, otherwise rational individuals proclaim that Tony Blair started the epidemic deliberately, because he wants to destroy British farming. Some say that 'animal rights people' started it, others that 'it was a French', still others find in foot and mouth an EU plot against the whole of British agriculture.

Farmers and businesspeople in the Settle district hate Tony Blair as much as mining communities detested Margaret Thatcher. Only a few brave souls admit to voting Labour. The local Tory MP increased his vote, but was booed at a public meeting when he said that there was no conspiracy. Like the Settle-Seattle misunderstanding, the popularity of such theories reveals the growing dissonance between urban and rural populations. The spread of conspiracy-based politics, including rumours of a secretly planned 'super-cull', is stifling rational debate and making reconciliation far harder to achieve. Far from strengthening the farmers, it plays into the hands of their political enemies.

Yet, as with most popular conspiracy

theories, the rumours hold powerful elements of truth. Labour has shown a strongly anti-rural bias, in both policy and rhetoric. Before the 2001 election, at least, the government listened only to big agribusiness, ignoring the small livestock farmer. Big business revolves around import, export and long-distance transport of livestock – the means by which foot and mouth has spread. It is based on intensive farming, which has proved to be as inefficient as it is cruel, for it is poisoning the public and producing disease, including foot and mouth and BSE. EU regulations requiring mass slaughter are being inflexibly enforced by ministers too craven to defy Brussels, unlike their Dutch counterparts,

who vaccinated healthy livestock and gave the Eurocrats the contempt they deserve. Animal rights campaigners, who protest against hunting, shooting and even angling, have stayed strangely silent in the face of the cull, although it is the greatest act of animal cruelty on

record. The National Farmers Union is seen as unrepresentative, expressing only the views of a business elite. Its initials are cruelly adapted to 'No F-ing Use'. Small wonder that hill farmers feel conspired against and that in Settle, like Seattle, cultural battle lines are being drawn.

Margaret Beckett is a more able politician than the hapless Nick Brown. She has survived despite an un-Blairite social conscience. But her new ministry does not even include 'agriculture' in its title and so its relationship with farmers is immediately compromised. Foot and mouth might not have been 'started deliberately', but it has given the green light to traditional farming's opponents and their 'theme park' vision of the countryside. As happens so often these days, corporate interests unite with Politically Correct busybodies to destroy a traditional way of life. Ecologists should side with the farmers against big business, with communities like Settle against an overweening State. This means detaching Green politics from metro-provincial prejudice.

Aidan Rankin is deputy editor of New European magazine. His book The Politics of the Forked Tongue: Authoritarian Liberalism will be published later this year.



STARVING THE WORLD OF GOOD SENSE

In the wake of a new UNDP report, **Devinder Sharma** argues that biotechnology will bypass, rather than benefit, the hungry.

The former Prime Minister of India, the late Mr Morarji Desai, strictly adhered to an unwritten principle. He would not inaugurate any conference, whether national or international, which did not focus on rural development. It so happened that during his tenure the aircraft industry wanted to hold a conference in New Delhi.

In the eyes of the industry, the inauguration of their international conference by anyone other than the Prime Minister was not palatable. Knowing full well that the Prime Minister would not make an exception, the aircraft industry came up with an imaginative title for the conference: Aerodynamics and rural development.

The global community is following suit. Agricultural biotechnology advances are being desperately promoted in the name of eradicating hunger and poverty. The misguided belief that the biotechnological 'silver bullet' can solve hunger, malnutrition and real poverty has prompted industry and the development community, political masters and policy makers, agricultural scientists and economists to chant the mantra of 'harnessing technology to address specific problems facing poor people'. And, into the bargain, what is being conveniently overlooked is that what the world's 840 million hungry need is just food, which is abundantly available.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) annual Human Development Report (HDR) 2001, *Making New Technologies Work for Human Development*, is yet another biotechnology industry-sponsored study. It categorically mentions on the one hand that 'technology is created in response to market pressures – not the needs of poor people, who have little purchasing power,' and yet, goes on unabashedly to eulogise the virtues of an untested technology in the laboratories of the North. These in-

turn are being pushed onto the gullible resource-poor communities of the South – and that too in the name of eradicating hunger and poverty.

The report states that emerging centres of excellence throughout the developing world are already providing hard evidence of the potential for harnessing cutting-edge science and technology (as biotechnology is fondly called) to tackle

'What is being conveniently overlooked is that what the world's 840 million hungry need is just food'

centuries-old problems of human poverty. But what the report does not mention is the fact that the biggest challenge facing the global community is increasing hunger and poverty in the developing countries, which need to be tackled by a social and political commitment rather than a market-driven technological agenda.

To say that 'if the developing community turns its back on the explosion of technological innovation in food, medicine and information, it risks marginalising itself', is in reality a desperate effort to ensure that the US economic interests are not sacrificed at the altar of development.

Attacking poverty – or the poor?

Such is the desperation at the growing isolation of the US in the global food market because of its 'transgenic' food that all kinds of permutations and combinations, including increased food aid to Africa's school-going children, are being attempted. The deft manipulation of the prestigious HDR to promote US farm interests, however, will cast an ominous shadow over the credibility of

future UN programmes for human development.

In agriculture, the HDR claims plant breeding promises to generate higher yields and resistance to drought, pests and diseases. Biotechnology offers, it says, the only or the best 'tool of choice' for marginal ecological zones – left behind by the green revolution but home to more than half the world's poorest people, dependent on agriculture and livestock. It is true that the green revolution left behind the small and marginal farmers living in some of the world's most inhospitable areas. But the way the tools of cutting-edge technology are being applied and blindly promoted, biotechnology will certainly bypass the world's hungry and marginalised.

A third of the world's hungry and marginalised live in India. And if India alone were to launch a frontal attack on poverty eradication and feeding its 320 million hungry, much of the world's hunger problem would be resolved.

Never before in contemporary history has the mankind been witness to such a glaring and shameful 'paradox of plenty'. In India alone, more than 60 million tonnes of food grains are stacked, the bulk of it in the open, while some 320 million go to bed hungry every night. In neighbouring Bangladesh and Pakistan too, food silos are bursting. And yet, these three countries are home to nearly half the world's population of hungry and the marginalised. While none of these countries has shown the political courage to use the mountains of food grain surplus to address the age-old problem of hunger, the international scientific and development community too is equally guilty by turning a blind eye to the biggest human folly of the 21st century.

After all, science and technology is aimed at removing hunger. The Green revolution was aimed at addressing the problem of hunger, and did a remarkable

job within its limits. And now, while stockpiles of food are left to rot, the global community appears reluctant to make it available to the marginalised communities who cannot afford to buy pay for it. No aid agency, including the so-called philanthropic ones: Ford, Rockefeller, ActionAid, Christian Aid, Oxfam, the British Department for International Development and the like are willing to take the bull by the horns.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, which works towards reducing hunger, has also shied away from this Herculean task. It has instead convened a meeting of Heads of State in Rome in November, five years after the World Food Summit, to reiterate its promise of halving world's hunger by the year 2015.

The reality of hunger and malnutrition is too extreme to be easily comprehended. Hunger cannot be removed by producing transgenic crops with genes for Vitamin A. Hunger cannot be addressed by providing mobile phones to the rural communities. Nor can it be eradicated by providing the poor and hungry with an 'informed choice' of novel foods. Somehow, the authors of the HDR have missed the basic realities, overlooked the reality of the commercial interests of the biotechnology industries. In their over-enthusiasm to promote an expensive technology at the cost of the poor, they have forgotten that biotechnology has the potential to further the great divide between the haves and have-nots. No policy directive can help in bridging this monumental gap. The twin engines of economic growth – the technological revolution and globalisation – will only widen the existing gap. Biotechnology will, in reality, push more people into the hunger trap. With public attention and resources being diverted from the day-to-day reality, hunger will only grow in the years to come.

This does not, however, imply that this writer is against technology. Technology is essential to every society but must be used in a way that helps promote human development. Technology cannot be blindly promoted, as is done in the UNDP report, in an obvious effort to bolster the industry's interests. Ignoring food security in the

name of ensuring 'profit security' for private companies, can only further marginalise any gains there may be. And herein lies a grave danger.

The science of avoidance

While political leaders and the development community are postponing till the year 2015 the task of halving the number of the world's hungry, the scientific community too has found an easy escape route. In almost all of the genetic engineering laboratories, whether in the North or in the South, the focus of research is on crops which address the problems of malnutrition or 'hidden hunger' by incorporating edible vaccines or genes for Vitamin A, iron, and other

'If poor people cannot afford to buy their daily dietary requirement of rice, how do we propose to make "golden rice" available to them?'

micro-nutrients. But what is not being realised is that if the global scientific and development community were to aim at eradicating hunger at the first place, there would be no 'hidden hunger'.

Take, for instance, the much-touted 'golden rice', which contains the genes for Vitamin A. It is true that there are 12 million people in India alone who suffer from Vitamin A deficiency. To say that 'golden rice' would provide the poor with a choice of 'novel foods' is to ignore the realities. It is also known that almost the entire Vitamin A deficient population in India lives in marginalised areas and comprise people who cannot or who do not have access to two square meals a day. If these hungry people were to get their adequate dietary intake or the two square meals a day, they would not suffer from Vitamin A deficiency or for that matter any other micro-nutrient deficiency. If poor people cannot afford to buy their normal dietary requirement of rice for a day, how do we propose to make 'golden rice' available to them?

This reminds me of exactly what another former Indian Prime Minister,

the late Mrs Indira Gandhi, used to do when it came to addressing problems.

If the ethnic crisis confronting the northeast Indian State of Assam became unmanageable, she would create another problem in northwestern Punjab. National attention gets diverted to the fresh crisis confronting Punjab, and the country forgets Assam. Simple. And when terrorism in Punjab gets out of control, create another problem down south, in Tamil Nadu. And slowly, people would forget about Punjab. For political leaders, Mrs Gandhi's mantra does provide an easy escape route.

And this is exactly what the Heads of State of 170-odd countries intend to do when they gather at the second World Food Summit in Rome in November.

Scientists, development agencies and policy-makers (and now of course the United Nations) seem to have derived their futuristic vision from the political sagacity of Mrs Gandhi. After all, there are only two ways to divert the attention of the international community from the more pressing and immediate problems of abject hunger and poverty. One is to postpone, as the FAO has done, the deadline for reduction of hunger (and then by only a half) to the year 2015. The second is to talk of the virtues and potentials of biotechnology for eradicating 'hidden hunger' and malnutrition in the next two decades.

Who will take on the biggest challenge of all, the elimination of that hunger which is the root cause of real poverty and lopsided human development, is an issue on which no one is willing to stick his neck out. With even the UNDP buckling under industrial pressure, the monumental task of feeding the hungry – at a time when food surpluses are rotting – may eventually be left to market forces.

The underlying message is very clear: the poor and hungry will have to live on hope.

Devinder Sharma is a New Delhi-based food and trade policy analyst. His recent works include two books: GATT to WTO: Seeds of Despair and In the Famine Trap. He can be contacted at: dsharma@ndf.vsnl.net.in.



OUT OF CONTROL

What use a 5 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases, asks **Stephanie Roth**, when the big oil companies profit from polluting at over a million pounds an hour?

'Now we can go home and look our children in the eye.' So said EU commissioner for the environment Margot Wallstrom, following the 'historic' agreement at Bonn. But while the assembled politicians stood around and patted each other on the back, the rest of the world kept moving, and nowhere faster than in the super-slick, sickeningly quick world of oil. For before the grin had faded from the politicians' faces, the oil behemoths had begun announcing their – yet further – record earnings for the last quarter.

There is nothing wrong with profit *per se*, but it does get worrying when a company like Exxon-Mobil, just a day after they 'did it' in Bonn, announces a record \$4.38 billion in second-quarter earnings, especially when one considers that its earnings for 2000 were exceedingly close to Sweden's GDP for that same year. Just a week on, Royal Dutch/Shell announced its buoyant quarterly earnings – in the year 2000 the company earned more than Austria's entire GDP. In May, reporting on the first quarter of what may ultimately be its most successful year ever, Royal Dutch/Shell said it was pumping about \$1.5 million in profit an hour and sitting on over \$11 billion in the bank.

And here lies the problem. The sustained surge in energy prices has brought piles of cash, and pressure from shareholders to put it to 'good' use.

BP/Amoco's \$200 million investment in photovoltaics and development of solar power over the last five years not only provides an in-house clearing system but 'could reduce the costs of meeting the sort of targets agreed at Kyoto by \$20 billion a year'. In June, Royal Dutch/Shell launched the Shell foundation with a Sustainable Energy Programme and a budget of \$30 million for the next three years (or, to put it another way, 20 hours work). Exxon-Mobil lags behind, but then again the Exxon Valdez oil spill was expensive (not that they paid up). Still, spending

money isn't easy for big oil these days; options in terms of return are limited. Whilst some trim debts, others are buying back stock or trying to acquire companies. But what all are dreaming about is developing elephantine oil fields and with such high earnings that there aren't any challenges that can't be met, be they in the Caspian Sea or offshore exploration in Brazil. Ingenious engineering projects are highly popular.

In June, Shell joined six oil companies in signing on to a \$30 billion project to build a series of water, electricity and petrochemical plants in Saudi Arabia; the world's most productive oil state. As a member of OPEC which accounts for about 40 per cent of world production, Saudi Arabia's steady oil output is of vital importance to global oil prices. Thus, even if profits don't materialise, the project offers attractive opportunities: it will significantly increase the companies' status in the region. According to Occidental's CEO, Ray Irani, they're all hoping for even bigger Saudi oil and gas payoffs down the road. Of course, it's also a place to shove billions in cash before shareholders start complaining about reserves. The project itself is broken into three segments. The largest, the South Ghawar natural gas project, is led by Exxon-Mobil, and with Shell and BP/Amoco as partners it carries a price tag of at least \$16 billion. The second, also led by Exxon-Mobil, includes on- and off-shore natural gas exploration in the Red sea and carries a price tag of \$5–10 billion. The project also includes plans to develop two existing gas fields and to build petrochemical, water and electric plants and a pipeline.

The third, lead by Royal Dutch/Shell and also priced between \$5–10 billion, will develop natural gas from two existing oil fields; there will also be the construction of yet another pipeline and a further petrochemical plant. Water and electricity plants are once again included in the plans.

But why am I telling you all this? Just take a globe and look at where these companies work; they are in the Caspian and most of the former Eastern Bloc countries; they are in the US, in the North Sea, in Indonesia, in Brazil, Venezuela and in China to name but a few. What do they do? They burn fossil fuels and make sure we stay dependent on liquid gold. Their investment into renewables will merely prolong our chance to breathe and drive those petrol cars a little longer, and to their profit.

The situation is out of control. These companies are posting unprecedented earnings that are spent on the craziest of projects at a prize that ultimately we all will pay; they're inflating themselves to a size and influence beyond any control. Best of all though, is that whilst our elected representatives have come to label the worried amongst us as 'thugs' and allow themselves insolent statements such as 'these guys don't represent anyone, if the public knew their views, they'd disagree with them', it is precisely those tax-paying citizens who the politicians less and less represent. So while we continue to pay taxes for anything but representation, governments behave as the hired lackeys of big polluters, whom they then reward with the most generous of tax breaks – eg not taxing petrol used for aviation, or the extraction of oil from the North Sea. And while the world fiddled with Kyoto's 5 per cent, Bush was preparing to burn \$33.5 billion in subsidies, grants and tax-breaks to some of the world's biggest polluters. This is reality and unless resolved, no so-called 'sinks' or 'carbon credits' or ridiculous 5 per cent emission reductions, will effect the changes necessary to prevent the devastating effects of human-induced climate change. Otherwise, before long Margot, there won't be any children left to look into the eyes of.

*Stephanie Roth is news and campaigns editor of **The Ecologist**.*

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE TIGERS GONE?

THERE ARE MORE PET TIGERS IN AMERICA THAN WILD TIGERS IN THE REST OF THE WORLD. WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON? ASKS **SONIA SHAH**.

Everyone knows that the tiger is one of the world's endangered species. With the panda, whale and elephant, it's one of the media's favourite 'struggling wildlife' icons. Yet, bizarrely, while its numbers are slipping in its natural Asian habitats, a new kind of tiger is doing rather well over in America. The pet tiger.

According to the Zoological Society of London, between 5,000 and 7,000 tigers live in the wild around the world. Yet at least as many pace in cages owned by private American citizens, who own between 6,000 and 7,000 endangered tigers as pets, according to the US-based Animal Protection Institute.

While the 1973 US Endangered Species Act and the 1975 international Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna cracked down on the taking of endangered animals from the wild, neither act regulates what happens to the progeny of the endangered animals brought to the United States before their passage. Today, owning a captive-born endangered animal is legal in 31 US states. Breeding and selling these animals requires a few permits and licences, which even some endangered-cat owners say are too easy to obtain.

Much of the private trade in endangered tigers originated in 'surplus' tigers dumped by zoos. Zoos hungry for the outpouring of public attention paid to new zoo babies bred more tigers than they could keep, and ended up selling the surplus cubs to private breeders, who in turn sold the animals to auctioneers, hunting farms, and pet-owners. US-based trade magazines such as *Animal Marketplace Magazine* and *Animal Finder's Guide* list

exotic animal sales and auctions, along with ads from tiger breeders and pet owners, soliciting purchases (\$3,500 for a pair of Bengal tigers), trades (12-week-old de-clawed Siberian tiger for a baby lynx or cougar), and 'jungle-cat reduction sales'.

There are dozens of internet sites and even private associations such as the National Alternative Pet Association that promote private ownership of exotic and endangered species.

But why would a private American citizen want to own a huge, carnivorous Asian predator? 'Something about their sleek bodies, graceful movements, self-assured independence, and raw power,' wrote one big-cat owner, 'attracts like no other animal.' This intoxicating attraction is almost sexual: 'you can almost feel the smooth ripple of rock hard muscles as the cat shifts slightly to put its massive head in your lap. The rumble as the cat begins to purr is so deep it is felt more than heard, and echoes through your body until your whole being resonates with its subdued power.'

Once they own an exotic animal, many eventually turn into self-made conservationists, incorporating their farms and ranches as non-profit nature centres. Although some may be managed well, others are clearly politically-correct cover for poorly executed exotic-pet-ownership. The Tigers Only Preserve in New Jersey traces its founding to 1976, when a former circus employee bought two Bengal tiger cubs from a big-cat trainer at a New Jersey theme park. She kept them in a barn next to her rented apartment. In 1987, Joan Byron-Marasek's permit was denied because of the inadequacy of her facilities. Three of the tiger sub-species she wanted covered by the permit were already extinct, which gives a sense of her knowledge of the endangered tigers she professed to want to save.

But the next year her permit came through and by 1999, she had over two dozen tigers on her 12-acre compound in New Jersey, which is closed to the public. Over a decade of annual inspections had apparently found little amiss, yet in January 1999, one of her tigers escaped the compound and wandered the New Jersey suburbs for seven hours before being shot and killed by state officials.

The incident threw a rare light on the preserve, which few neighbours knew about. A curator from the Bronx Zoo who was brought in to inspect it called the preserve the 'worst facility that I have ever seen,' citing rotting deer carcasses, cramped facilities, rat infestations, and evidence of malnourishment among the tigers.

While neighbours hustled together a lawsuit against her and state authorities attempted to shut her preserve down, Byron-Marasek went on breeding her tigers, and five more were born in April 1999. The state wildlife agency issued her permit to use the tigers for advertising and other theatrical purposes, but authorities found no evidence of either.



Joan Byron-Marasek and her attorney at the Tigers Only Preservation Society

THE STREETS OF SANTIAGO

ONCE CONSIDERED TO BE SUBVERSIVE LOWLIFES, CHILE'S STREET-RUBBISH PILLAGERS HAVE TURNED THEMSELVES INTO AN EFFICIENT RECYCLING ARMY. **SOPHIE ARIE** REPORTS.

Around six o'clock each day, as well-heeled bankers bustle home through the centre of the Chilean capital, Santiago, Ricardo Manso, his wife Maria and their two teenage children roll up their sleeves and squat down to work on the street corner, systematically pulling every recyclable scrap of paper, cardboard, tin can or electrical wiring from the day's stinking rubbish sacks.

'We've been working this corner for eight years now,' says 42-year-old Ricardo. 'It's not a bad patch. There are lots of offices around here and white paper is what pays best.'

Ricardo is just one of the army of unofficial workers in Chile who scratch out a living by salvaging anything that can be sold from the leftovers of the 'other half'.

Picking over rubbish heaps and rummaging through bins is a last resort for thousands around the world. In Chile, this traditionally stigmatised, low-life activity – considered subversive under Augusto Pinochet's 1973–90 military regime and still frowned upon in upper class districts – has become so organised and thorough it has made Chile the third most efficient paper recycler in the world.

Economic recession since 1998 has pushed more and more people out of their jobs and onto the streets. Unemployment may be dangerously close to 10 per cent, but Chile's streets have never been cleaner. Over 50,000 *cartoneros* – literally cardboard men – beat the country's streets leaving hardly a bin unturned and stacking their battered tricycles high with flattened cardboard and other materials. Tons of salvaged scraps are sorted on the pavements and neatly bagged up each day by this unofficial workforce to be sold to fleets of lorries from specialised recycling firms.

SOREPA, the country's main paper and card recycling company, says it processed 230,000 tons of paper last year. That is 60 per cent of all the paper used in Chile, and 20 per cent more than the previous year. The company pays between 50–150 pesos (5–15 pence) for a kilo of white paper, and less for cardboard, allowing well organised collectors to earn as much as 180,000 pesos (£180) per month, more than the minimum wage.

Drinks cans are higher earners, fetching 450 pesos (45 pence) a kilo. A handful of enterprising collectors have struck deals to deliver 'empties' to the likes of Coca-Cola, building thriving businesses and earning enough to buy their own trucks. Although there is no law in Chile, as there is in Europe, making firms directly responsible for waste from their products, the cheap labour and transport costs of retrieving cans here means recycling makes business sense.

'Nobody does this job if they have the choice. Some of the collectors are aware that they are doing something good for the environment, but most of them are just struggling to make sure they have something to eat,' says Isabel del Campo, of the government's Fund for Solidarity and Social Investment (FOSIS).

'Rubbish sorting is neither official nor illegal,' she explains. But it is increasingly accepted and the workers are increasingly well organised. Since the government recognised their activity as a

Aside from the canned-hunt ranches, where for a few thousand dollars, hunters can shoot an endangered cat at close range, Americans who own tigers – whether as livestock, pets, or rescued victims – all claim that they are saving this endangered species from extinction. 'I like raising animals that are rare or endangered,' says *Animal Finder's Guide* founder Pat Hoctor. 'Since there is less land each day available to animals due to man's encroachment, I feel animals must exist in captivity or face extinction.' Yet according to zoologists, most of the thousands of privately owned tigers in the United States, as well as close to 200 of all zoo tigers, are hybridised, 'generic' or 'mutt' tigers. Breeders introduced jungle-dwelling tigers to Siberian tigers, to produce these generic tigers that could never survive in the wild.

The scientific breeding program that accredited zoos around the world introduced to their tigers in the 1980s, while laudable, may not help save tigers either. These zoos have weeded out generic tigers and instead bred captive tigers to maintain sub-species lines. The idea is to create a 'genetic reservoir' that could be re-introduced into the wild or used to re-seed a new wild population.

Scientists have introduced other captive-born endangered animals into the wild, in expensive, time-consuming, and small-scale projects that have shown mixed results to date. But for zoo tigers, this unlocking of the doors seems especially unlikely, zoo officials say. The wilderness to introduce them to shrinks daily. Regionally, the human poverty, maldevelopment, and pollution that threaten wild tigers show no signs of abating. Until the world solves these colossal, global problems, there's little chance for any tigers in the wild, captive-born or not.

So why do American zoos keep tigers at all? Zoos claim that their tiger exhibits play a crucial educational role, alerting the 300 million people who visit the world's zoos to the problems facing endangered species. Clearly, American zoo exhibits have inspired a deep love for these majestic creatures that normally live so very far away. The Tiger Information Center at the Minnesota Zoo receives volumes of mail from people who write, 'I love tigers. How can I buy one?'

The desire to possess a creature doesn't appear to mitigate pet-tiger-owners' desire to save them as well. For them, conservation is ultimately about providing a safe and loving home to a seemingly homeless endangered animal. According to this brand of conservation ethics, all a tiger really needs is a healthy dose of human love. And love the animals they do. Many cherish their tigers even after (or perhaps because of) evidence of their anti-human ferocity. One pet tiger bit the head of his owner, ripping his jaw and ear canal out of his skull. The recovered owner still owns two Bengal tiger cubs and four adult tigers. He said the mauling 'hasn't changed the way I look at them.' Another woman let her daughter sleep with a tiger cub, which later severed the 10-year-old girl's carotid artery and killed her.

These adored tigers and their adoring owners may symbolise the final conquest of a novel kind of ecological imperialism. The living, roaring animal, 'its repertory stunted by the impoverished constraints of human care,' as biologist E O Wilson put it, is subdued in its cage as an unlikely plaything, 'a mute speaker trapped inside the unnatural clearing, like a messenger to me from an unexplored world.'

But pet-tiger-owners' passion for the animals is real. 'I feel it's my mission to save these animals from extinction,' Joan Byron-Marasek says. 'I know I'm doing it better than any other place.'

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AP PHOTOS

social and environmental service in 1995, the Association of Independent

Collectors (ASRI), a kind of union of 325 collectors and nine garage-like sorting centres throughout the country, has begun negotiating deals with recycling firms and devising strategies to adapt to market fluctuations. 'We work closely with the government and with the private recycling firms. People have started to see that we have an important role to play for the environment. That makes them accept us more,' said Uldadicio Bustos, president of the ASRI.

'People all over Latin America are doing this to survive and they are still totally marginalised. Here, the collectors have made the connection between what they do and how it can help the environment and that has been the key to their success,' said Sarah Larrain of the Sustainable Chile Foundation which, with other environmental groups, including Ecology and Development, run by British environmentalist Paul Orr, helped fund some of the first recycling projects after 1990 when Chile emerged from 17 years of military rule.

Nowadays these thriving micro-businesses are helping to make the public think twice about what they throw out.

Offices have developed the habit of throwing their waste paper out separately from other rubbish, saving the *cartoneros* from sifting through soggy tea bags and the like. Shops dump cardboard boxes on pavements knowing that within minutes they will be snapped up by the nearest passing collector. Convinced that the public would co-operate, ASRI is pushing for the government to declare a 'recyclable rubbish only' day in the Santiago area.

'Chileans, especially in cities, are increasingly sensitive to recycling issues these days,' says Gonzalo Velasquez of the government environmental agency, CONAMA. 'That's mainly because public refuse dumps have started to fill up and nobody wants a new one to open near them. But whatever the reason, the result is better awareness of the need to recycle.'

The government – which does not as yet have a formal recycling policy – acknowledges that the collectors are not only making a valiant contribution towards preserving the environment. They are also keeping the level of unwanted waste to an absolute minimum, saving local authorities thousands of pounds in refuse management costs. Some moves have been made by local authorities to issue permits, uniforms and official municipal tricycles to the workers, formalising their profession and giving them some sort of protection on the streets where they are still seen as lower class citizens and are often the first suspects when crime occurs. But the life of a collector remains highly insecure. The job is not only unhygienic but also dangerous: buses knock collectors down or crush their tricycles. There is no job security or guaranteed income, not to mention health insurance, social security or pension.

'We need the government to give us proper worker status. We want to have some kind of security, health insurance at least, like other workers have,' said Bustos.

Things have changed a lot. Thirty years ago, Luis, who runs a sorting centre in Santiago, recalls there were fewer collectors and they were rummaging for bones which were used to make combs and soap. 'Nowadays our job is cleaner and safer and we can make better money dealing as micro-businesses with the big companies.'

'Times are relatively good. But we know that one day outside companies will come in and start using better technology to do our job,' said Bustos. What is not clear is whether technology could ever do the job so well.

Sophie Arie is a freelance journalist currently living in Santiago.

NO POLITICS – JUST ELECTIONS

IT'S WHAT BIG BUSINESS WANTS, NOT VOTERS, THAT DEFINES ELECTIONS. JUST LOOK AT WHAT THE PAPERS WRITE, SAYS **DAVID EDWARDS**.

Safe behind the barricades at the recent G8 summit in Genoa, Tony Blair chastised protesters for hindering the work of the 'free world'. Implicit in his pronouncement was the standard notion that the 'good guys' of the West are struggling selflessly to bring the alleged benefits of the modern globalised economy – freedom of expression, association and the right to vote – to the 'bad guys' and 'victims' of the 'unfree' 'rogue states', regimes where freedom is but a distant dream glimpsed (and craved) through the portal of Star TV until people, politics and markets are liberated by the munificent West.

These are states such as Cuba, about which historian Jules Benjamin once noted with reference to US arrangements for the country from 1898 onwards: 'In effect, the Cubans were not to have politics; only elections.' In their book, *Demonstration Elections*, Edward Herman and Frank Brodhead describe how elections in the Third World have commonly been employed by colonial and imperialist powers to neutralise opposition, both at home and abroad, 'by means of a symbolic act'. The logic is simple enough: overwhelming economic and military power ensure that the West is able to employ money, credit, import and export quotas, military intimidation, and other direct or covert interventions, to influence election outcomes.

In the age of global corporate colonialism, however, 'democratic' elections in the free world of Bush and Blair increasingly perform a similar 'demonstration' function. Today big business uses its vast economic and political leverage to ensure that parties, policies and media coverage conform to the requirements of the globalising corporate agenda. To ensure, in other words, that we do not have politics; only elections.

The first task is to ensure that leading political parties come to represent, in effect, the left and right wings of the one Business Party – thus the convergence of Republicans and Democrats in the United States, and New Labour and Tories in Britain. This destruction of democracy is described by further benign-sounding euphemisms such as 'modern' and 'pragmatic'. (The *Independent*, for example, explains that these are not 'times of ideological dispute over the direction of the nation's affairs. The broad lines of managing a prosperous economy are agreed.')

The second task is to ensure that debate during the election campaign reflects this stifling of political choice. Thus in the first three weeks of campaigning for the 2001 general election, the communications research centre at Loughborough University found that 'there has been little sign of real issues' in media election coverage, where 'few issues make the news'.

Despite their prominence in the pre-election months, the key topical national issues of rail travel, general transport, BSE and foot and mouth, the environment, defence, local government, housing and employment each comprised fewer than 2 per cent of election themes coded.

Over this same period coverage of the world beyond the UK showed little respect for what really concerned people. Europe was the most covered single issue of all, yet the British public's apathy

on the subject was shown in its damning rejection of the Conservative Party at the polls. However, no time was found to mention New Labour's 'ethical foreign policy' deception, nor to review the non-existent 'genocide' used as a pretext for Blair's bombing of Serbia, his silence as East Timor burned, nor the suffering inflicted on Iraq. The fact that senior UN diplomats had resigned in September 1998 and February 2000, describing New Labour's policy on Iraq 'genocidal', was not deemed relevant in judging New Labour's performance since 1997. What, after all, is the mileage in the two factions of the Business Party discussing human rights issues?

Peter Golding, co-author of the Loughborough University report, argues that the narrow range of representation and debate is standard for modern elections: 'The pattern in 2001, of very few issues dominating and many areas being largely absent is exactly as it was in 1997 and 1992... Issues such as social security, housing, the environment and so on are [usually] all but invisible. To explain it you might have to look at news coverage outside election periods, which is also remarkably devoid of regular coverage of many of the issues you list.'

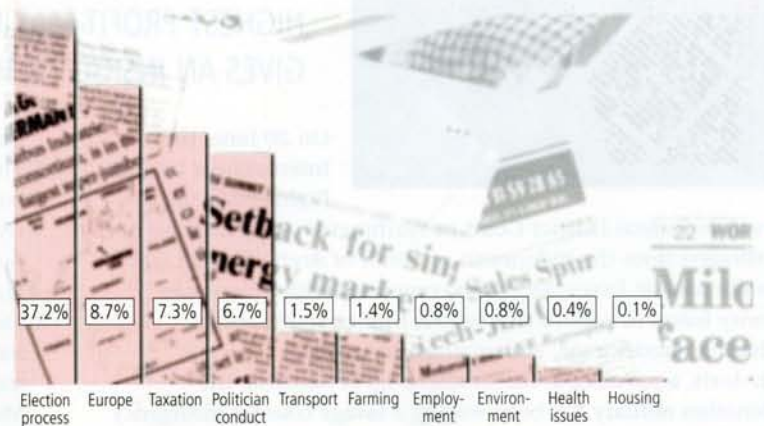
So what does this dramatic denial of meaningful debate mean for the notion that British elections are democratic? 'Democracy assumes and requires an informed citizenry and I have repeatedly gone on record as saying that in present circumstances the media in the UK fall far short of this.' In the event, just 52 per cent of the electorate voted, with only 25 per cent voting for New Labour – a result nonetheless described by the media as a 'landslide'.

Despite the dramatic absence of honest and open debate, the media were of one voice in exhorting voters to take the election seriously, to vote. The *Independent* dismissed 'the ballot-spoilers, the miserable anti-democrats'. AC Grayling wrote in the *Guardian* of the 'ignorant anti-politics' promoted by 'sceptics and idlers' responsible for 'betraying the endeavours of history' – in contradistinction to the idlers and cynics in the press, where there has been 'little sign of real issues'. Like the *Independent*, the *Guardian* assured us 'There are vitally important issues at stake in this election, and they have been debated in depth.'

While lavishing, on average, 10 times the coverage on the election as on the second most covered story each week, the media found no space to discuss the influence of the growth of corporate power on the modern 'convergence' of political parties. Instead it was taken as read that political focus groups meticulously research public opinion so parties can design competing policies to attract the popular vote. The fact that all leading parties regularly fail to offer the public what they want goes unexplained. As Nick Cohen, in a rare departure from the conformist norm, wrote in the *Observer*:

'The focus-group organisers' claim that they are engineers of democracy who objectively record public desire and recommend pragmatic policies which Blair and Hague can sell to the masses. According to the polls the parties are meant to worship, large majorities want the railways renationalised, the state to fund long-term nursing care for the elderly and the private sector to be kept out of the NHS. Yet when the market research tells stories which upset business interests, the populist leaders of the two main parties somehow find the inner strength and sheer bloody guts to be very unpopular indeed.'

Prior to the crucial moment of political change, the 1996 edition of the *British Social Attitudes Survey* found that contrary to the policies of both major parties, most British people wanted more



Other issues covered included: NHS, Crime, Education, Public Services, Economy, Social Security, Information Technology/E-commerce, Arts/culture, Local Government, Defence, Northern Ireland and Business. Information provided by Loughborough University.

spending on health, education and social benefits, even if it meant paying more tax. Over 60 per cent favoured 'tax and spend'. A large proportion of people believed that 'government should redistribute income from the better-off to the less well-off'. A strong majority believed that 'big business benefits owners at the expense of workers'. Samuel Brittan of the *Financial Times* commented that if New Labour were to make 'even a fraction of the changes in attitude that Tony Blair has promised... UK capitalism will be far more unconstrained than the electorate really desires.'

The implication – that New Labour's adoption of Tory-style business-friendly policies has effectively disenfranchised much of the electorate, denying what it 'really desires' – is all but unmentionable in the press. After decades of a Conservative leaning press, ended by the Murdoch's Sun transforming into a Labour supporter in 1997, the endorsement in 2001 of New Labour by over 91 per cent of the national daily press went almost without comment. The stifling of debate in the tabloids took the form of diversion, with 77 per cent of front-page leads in the election period in the national tabloids having nothing to do with the election.

Unaware of the irony, journalists mocked the democratic credentials of contemporaneous elections in Iran. Echoing the general derision, Channel 4 declared: 'The people of Iran are going to the polls today, but as every candidate has had to pledge their allegiance to the Islamic state, there isn't much choice.'

Of the 35 million Iranians eligible to vote, 83 per cent did vote, with 77 per cent voting for president Muhammad Khatami – statistics that British politicians would die for.

Speaking of the fact that all Western candidates must, in effect, pledge their allegiance to big business, Gore Vidal nutshells what it means to live in an age of elections without politics: 'Remember that the country is governed by vast conglomerates, many now so internationalised that there is no way of taxing them, much less punishing them, for buying elections to the Congress so that their lawyers can get them 'defence' contracts while exempting them from taxation... When a ruling establishment will not let daylight in on their workings because they own the media as well as the permanent rental of most of Congress, judiciary and executive, that doesn't leave much to talk about at election time except sex, the flag, the foetus and, in the good old days, Communism.'

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WHEN STAKES ARE HIGH

FORTUNE GLOBAL500 HAS NAMED EXXON-MOBIL THE WORLD'S HIGHEST PROFIT-MAKING COMPANY. **STEPHEN R SHALOM** GIVES AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT IT TAKES.

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On 20 June, the International Labour Rights Fund filed a lawsuit in Federal District Court in Washington, DC on behalf of 11 villagers from the Indonesian province of Aceh. The suit was brought against Exxon-Mobil for complicity with Indonesian security forces in committing serious human rights abuses, including murder, rape, kidnapping and torture.

In Aceh, a province at the northern tip of Sumatra, the Indonesian military has been waging a savage counter-insurgency war against a secessionist movement for years. Most of Aceh's four million people want independence, for three main reasons.

Firstly, although Indonesian authorities in Jakarta proclaimed a special autonomous status for Aceh in recognition of its historical and Islamic identity, in practice this autonomy was never realised. In 1945, the province was designated a 'special area', but this was repealed in 1950. In 1959, following secessionist conflicts, Aceh was declared a 'special territory' with considerable autonomy, but the central government never carried through its promises.

Secondly, Aceh's abundant resources, especially natural gas, have been exploited by largely bypassing the population of the province to the benefit of foreign firms, corrupt politicians, military officers, and well-connected locals. General Suharto, who ruled Indonesia from 1965 to 1998, insisted on being cut in on every major economic enterprise. Members of his family still own vast assets.

The third factor has been the great brutality of the Indonesian security forces. In 1989, Jakarta declared Aceh a 'Military Operations Region' (DOM), which essentially placed the province under martial law. The military launched a ruthless counter-insurgency campaign against the small 'Free Aceh Movement' (GAM), particularly targeting civilians suspected of sympathising with the guerrillas. Human rights groups estimate that at least 2,000 Acehese civilians were killed between 1989 and 1993 alone.

In May 1998, Suharto was forced from power and President Habibie and his successor President Wahid pledged to seek a resolution to the conflict. Yet killings increased and in the first half of this year alone 800 people have lost their lives.

What does this have to do with Exxon-Mobil? Aceh's natural gas is produced under contract by Mobil (which merged with Exxon in 1999), liquefied and sold by PT Arun, a joint venture between Indonesia's national energy company, Mobil and a Japanese firm. Mobil obtained its contract in the 1970s by the then standard method: providing stock shares in Mobil to Suharto's family.

The lawsuit filed in late June against Exxon-Mobil charges that in order to protect this exceedingly profitable investment, the US oil giant was complicit with Indonesian security forces in carrying out gross violations of human rights. This complicity is alleged to have operated on a number of levels:

1. Suharto assigned at least one unit of the Indonesian army, Unit 133, 'for the sole and specific purpose' of providing security to Mobil and PT Arun. In return, the two companies 'paid the Indonesian military a regular monthly or annual fee for such services'. According to the suit Mobil did not just pay for the military services, but controlled and directed them, 'making decisions about where to place bases, strategic mission planning,

and making decisions about specific deployment areas'.

2. The lawsuit claims Mobil provided Indonesian security forces with buildings used to 'interrogate, torture and murder' Acehese civilians suspected of separatist activities. It claims that Mobil provided equipment such as excavators used by the military to dig graves as well as roads on which victims would be transported.
3. The lawsuit charges that Mobil bought military equipment for Indonesian security forces and 'paid mercenaries to provide advice, training, intelligence and equipment' to the Indonesian army. Mobil's funds and support have not been used just to help protect the natural gas facilities, but to 'crush any dissent within Aceh'. Exxon-Mobil argues that it had no knowledge of what was going on and of how its assistance was being used. It claims it was told that its equipment was being borrowed 'for projects beneficial to the community'. Said Mobil's CEO in 1998: 'If anything happened because somebody used the equipment in a wrong way, I'm sorry about that.' According to Mobil officials, if the company had had any knowledge of atrocities, it would have protested strongly.

These are interesting claims. Suharto came to power in 1965, presiding over the slaughter of up to a million suspected leftists. Could Mobil have been unaware of this? The killings were widely cheered in the West (and facilitated by a dispatch of arms from Washington). The murderers were never punished; rather they were the very ones that Mobil hired as its security force.

As for Aceh itself, Business Week quotes H Saved Mudhahar, a former top official in the province: 'There wasn't a single person in Aceh who didn't know that massacres took place.' On a road travelled by Mobil employees every day during 1990 and 1991, there was a spot known as 'Skull Hill', where the stench of rotting human flesh could be smelled half a mile away.

In October 1998, a coalition of Indonesian human rights groups held a press conference in which they detailed how Mobil had supported human rights abuses in Aceh. If by some miracle Mobil didn't know what was going on before, it surely knew now. Yet it made no effort to break ties with the Indonesian army.

Then, in March 2001, Exxon-Mobil announced that it was suspending its activities in Aceh – not because of the ongoing massive atrocities against the Acehese, but because the military could not guarantee the safety of Mobil facilities and personnel. On 19 June, after further deployment of Indonesian troops, Exxon-Mobil indicated that it would resume its operations.

Nine days after the court suit was filed, readers of *The New York Times* were treated to a fascinating op-ed by Exxon-Mobil entitled *Corrosive Corruption*. 'Companies that participate in corrupted dealings do themselves no favours,' it thundered, going on to lament the inherent corruption in governmental institutions around the world; corruption that responsible multinationals should not, nay, must not tolerate. 'Reducing the impact of corruption will remain a long and difficult struggle.'

Noble stuff, and surely unconnected with the above events.

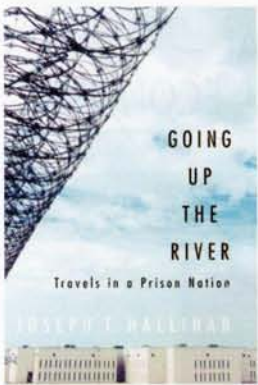
This article is taken from 'Exxon-Mobil in Aceh' by Stephen R Shalom, published as a ZNet Commentary on www.zmag.org. Other useful sites include www.pressurepoint.org, www.stopesso.com and www.campaignexxonmobil.org

Reviews

Books under review this month: **Going Up the River** Joseph T Hallinan • **Discovering Green Lanes** Valerie Belsey • **Just Capital – the liberal economy** Adair Turner • **Debunking Economics – the naked emperor of the social sciences** Steve Keen

GOING UP THE RIVER TRAVELS IN A PRISON NATION

by Joseph T Hallinan
RANDOM HOUSE 2001/\$24.95
ISBN: 0375502637



As the computerisation and globalisation of industry and trade accelerate, more and more blue collar jobs in the West are being lost every day. In January of this year, over 100,000 Americans were laid off, including 26,000 by Daimler-Chrysler, 16,000 by Lucent Technologies, 7,000 by appliance maker Whirlpool, and 6,000 by cake baker Sara Lee. In addition, J C Penney closed 50 of its department stores nationwide, leaving many thousands to look for other employment in a rapidly shrinking economy. Since all these cannot become computer programmers – the *gig du jour* in industrialised nations – you may wonder what happens to them, especially as their redundancy is not reflected in the sanitised US unemployment statistics, which only count those who are on the dole, ie have registered to receive unemployment benefits.

Well, Joseph T Hallinan may have the answer. According to the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Going Up the River – Travels in a Prison Nation* (a reference to Sing-Sing prison, up the Hudson River), incarceration has become a booming US industry. He examines the frightening increase in prisoners, prisons and related

industries in the US through the eyes of inmates, wardens, guards, and locals catering to the visiting families of inmates. With over two million citizens now locked up – more than half of them from ‘minorities’ (predominantly blacks and Hispanics) – prisons have become a \$100-billion-a-year industry and the main source of revenue for hundreds of communities all over the country.

Not surprisingly, Bush junior’s home state, Texas, took an early lead in capitalising on this new cottage industry. Texas not only leads the nation in executions, it also boasts the largest per capita percentage of live prison inmates. With roughly 7 per cent of the total US population, it has 11 per cent of the prison population. This does not mean that Texas has a higher crime rate than the other 49 states, only that it has more prisons to fill, with 100 new ones built in the last two decades. On Bush’s watch as governor, construction peaked with a new penal institution opening almost every week in 1995. The tiny town of Beeville near the Mexican border, population 13,000, is home to two prisons, no less, with some 7,200 itinerant guests who keep the permanent residents busy as bees, what with guarding and feeding them and catering to the needs of their week-end visitors. All in all, it’s a honey of a deal, as any Beevillian civilian will be tickled to tell ‘ya.

In a perverse reversal of the traditional pattern of free trade, a South African furniture maker even moved his factory from the veldt to a penitentiary in South Carolina – another state that has jumped on the correctional bandwagon. Evidently US prisoners come cheaper than native African labour, but it is doubtful if this should be hailed as a sign of increased universal equality and brotherhood. More likely it’s money talking.

While in Texas it was the collapse of the oil boom and Dubya’s self-righteous

judicature that brought about a boom in hoodlum ‘hoosegows’, in other states it was the flight of manufacturing and mining jobs to ‘developing countries’ (read: cheap labour markets) that prompted people to take up lock-ups as a livelihood. Sometimes they have no choice, as the mother of three in Virginia, who supports her children by working as a prison guard. After the local coal industry turned to ashes and her husband split on her, she was desperate for a job, and the new prison in town offered her a ticket to financial independence – bless the crooks!

In reading Hallinan’s account I was reminded of the apocryphal story about the two Chinese families stranded on a deserted island, who survived by taking in

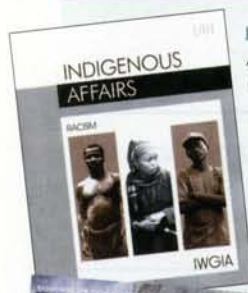
‘With over two million citizens now locked up... prisons have become a \$100 billion-a-year industry’ On *Going Up the River*

each other’s laundry. Perhaps one day a third of all US citizens will be in prison, and another third will be clothing, feeding and guarding them. The remaining one third of the population will of course be computer programmers. After all, somebody has to do something productive!

But prisons also offer opportunities for savvy investors, since many of the penitentiaries have been privatised, and are operated by such for-profit companies as the Wackenhut corporation, listed on the stock exchange. So now that dot.coms and other hi-tech NASDAQ stocks have lost two-thirds of their value in just one year, the time may be ripe for the prudent investor to take a whack at the priz biz instead – a guaranteed growth industry bound to pay high dividends as long as Americans keep locking ‘em up. It’s the next best thing to owning your own slaves...

Gard Binney

MAGAZINE RACK: Worthwhile reads you won't find in the shops.



INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
A sober, well-researched quarterly journal on indigenous peoples; the latest issue exposes case studies of racism and persecution suffered on every continent.
IWGIA – Classensgade 11E, DK-2100 Copenhagen.
Tel: +45 35 27 05 00
Email: iwgia@iwgia.org
Web: www.iwgia.org



ASCENT
A beautifully constructed new quarterly exploring yogic and spiritualist practice, with a strong ecological ethic informing its meditative and travel essays.
Ascent Magazine, 24 Ave du Mont-Royal Ouest, Suite

605, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2T 2S2.
Tel: +1 514 499 3999.
Email: subscriptions@ascentmagazine.com
Web: www.ascentmagazine.com



TONG TANA
Small magazine, strong voice. Its community of activists against rainforest destruction is deeply worried about the recent disappearance in Borneo of its central figure, Bruno Manser, but his fight continues.
Bruno-Manser-Fonds, Heuberg 25, CH-4051 Basel.
Tel: +41 61 261 94 74
Email: info@bmf.ch
Web: www.bmf.ch



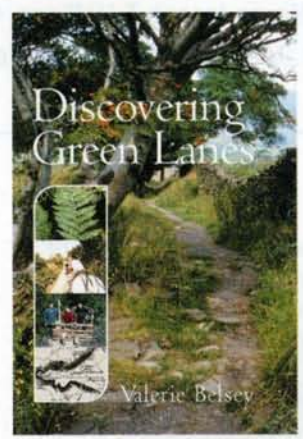
HUMANSCAPE
Brush up on India's grass-roots politics with articles on subjects as diverse as drought and disabled rights. Intelligent dispatches from frontline activists, volunteers and freelancers.
Foundation for Humanization, 11 Yogniti, 18 S V Road, Santacruz (W), Mumbai 400054, India. Email: humanscape@vsnl.net
Web: www.humanscapeindia.org



CENTRO HUMBOLDT – MONITOREO AMBIENTAL
A small-scale but vocal fortnightly newsletter on environmental issues in Nicaragua. With extremely useful updates on issues such as the privatisation of natural resources, GMO's., water, forests, development and energy, it's a good read – and for more than just brushing-up your Spanish!
Centro Humboldt, 768 Managua, Nicaragua.
Tel: + 505 249 2903
Email: humboldt@ibw.com.ni
Web: www.ibw.com.ni/~humboldt

DISCOVERING GREEN LANES

by Valerie Belsey
GREEN BOOKS 2001/£6.95
ISBN: 1-87009896X



What came before tarmac? People still traversed the countryside and needed paths to guide them. These paths were often subsumed into modern roads, but relics of a different time and pace of life remain, if you choose to look for them. These are the subject of Valerie Belsey's fascinating new book, which aims to provide all the information needed to carry out your own investigation.

The first green lane I encountered was revealed by a small herd of deer while I was tramping around fields in Devon, working as an ecologist. It was just about dawn and I was exhausted after a night radio-tracking hedgehogs. As I took a shortcut back to my caravan I spotted the deer. They took off towards a hedge, and then disappeared. Intrigued, I followed. And there I found a small gap that led into a green tunnel of trees overhanging a path that looked sunken into the hill. It must have been part of the old route over this hill, and was obviously long neglected. Walking along it as the day began was to take a journey back in time.

Green lanes can be far more formal and accessible than this. A green lane can be defined as a thoroughfare which is not wide enough for two four-wheeled vehicles to pass, which runs between hedges, fences or ditches, and which is green because of a preponderance of foliage. Definitions are hard to pin down, though, as the quality of a green lane is in its diversity, not its conformity to a rigid description.

This lack of clarity is one reason why they are under threat. The two main causes of their destruction are general neglect and the predations of off-road vehicles, highlighting the need to balance access with the damage it can cause.

After all, these paths were meant for use, though it is a little disingenuous for the four-wheel drive lobby to compare their activities with the feet of horses.

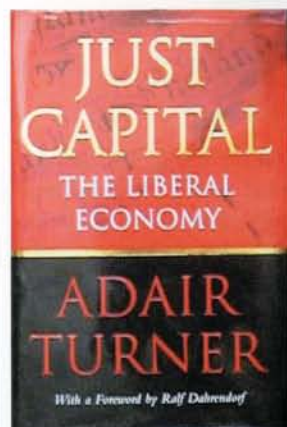
But why should we be interested? Though they are man-made corridors between equally man-made habitats, they are also the ultimate wildlife corridors. They can penetrate both the urban and the agricultural deserts bringing glimpses of diversity. This means that they can offer very different views on modern society. It is almost like looking in on another world when you observe modern society through the gauze of green.

For anyone interested in getting to know a little more about the old routes around our country, this book will prove fascinating, and if that interest makes you want to get involved then the book will prove invaluable.

Hugh Warwick

JUST CAPITAL – THE LIBERAL ECONOMY

by Adair Turner
MACMILLAN 2001/£20.00
ISBN: 0333900715



Reading this book's back cover is dislocating – like going to see *Tomb Raider* and finding out Lara Croft is vegan pacifist. Adair Turner – an ex-director of McKinsey, former chief of the CBI and currently a Vice Chairman of a major merchant bank – being lauded by Jonathan Porritt ('...an overwhelming case for using the power of the market to achieve vital environmental aims'), thanking Paul Ekins and Will Hutton for their encouragement.

What is going on?
Turner is an unapologetic enthusiast of the global market economy, but not an uncritical one. He argues that although there is little conflict between liberal sensibilities and market economics, left to themselves, markets will produce

inequality. Turner argues forcefully that there is no *a priori* reason for wanting the size of the public sector to shrink. For example, the Swedish economy, where Government spending accounts for 55 per cent of GDP, is perfectly viable as long as

'Turner springs a few surprises that will gratify social and environmental campaigners' *On Just Capital*

politicians are brave enough to finance spending through taxes and without resorting to borrowing.

The difficulty many environmentalists will have with his analysis is not so much the diagnosis, but his excessive faith in the power of economic instruments to spontaneously deliver solutions. It would require an impossibly high energy tax to persuade many commercial offices to install energy efficient computers, lighting and heating, but the extra cost would go almost unnoticed if mandated through higher statutory standards of performance. The level of congestion charging – £5 per day or a £1,000 per year – being contemplated by London would go unnoticed by rich commuters but would cause hardship for the poorly paid. What is the moral case for allocating road space by ability to pay as opposed to willingness to wait?

His analysis is strongest in its dissection of policy experts' obsessions with national competitiveness, the balance between the service sector and manufacturing, size of the public sector and the effects of the new economy. Turner springs a few surprises that will gratify environmental and social campaigners: he is open minded about introducing a Tobin Tax on foreign exchange transactions to curb the extreme volatility in that market; his enthusiasm for income redistribution is more apparent than the Government's; and he believes a ban on arms trade with despotic countries to have trivial macro-economically consequences for the UK but to be morally justified.

Turner writes with a pithy sense of humour ('McKinsey and Company, with that heroic absence of intellectual doubt that characterises my former partners...') but there is a slight air of the economics seminar – the book is heavy on jargon, data and bullet points.

But overall, Turner's book gives a fascinating insight into how closely aligned have become the agendas of liberals within big business and New Labour.

Prashant Vaze

also worth reading...

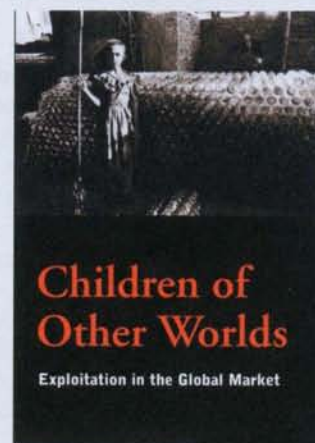
It's easy to forget as we argue in lofty polysyllables about paradigm-shifts and bioregionalism that one of the groups most exploited by globalisation is also the one least able to defend itself, namely children. **Children of Other Worlds** by Jeremy Seabrook (Pluto Press, £10.99, +44 (0)20 8348 2724) examines the international exploitation of children and exposes the hypocrisy, false piety and moral blindness that have narrowed so much of the debate in industrialised countries over the rights of the child. More than 40,000 children die daily in the developing world from avoidable sickness and disease. Tens of millions of children toil as slaves in all but name in factories, mines, mills and sweatshops, or scavenge an existence across urban wastelands.

And in the supposedly developed world, children's opportunities to live as children are stolen from them by drugs, alcohol, sexual abuse and violence. Nor are such tragedies, as is so often arrogantly assumed, the fates of those unable to afford a better alternative. Indeed, children of those better off financially often merely replace such abuses with consumerist slaverings over the chattels dangled before them on television, products that were more than likely made with the labour of children whose ages are little different to their own.

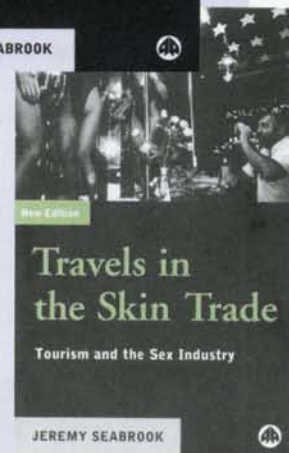
Also by Jeremy Seabrook on the Pluto Press imprint is a second edition of **Travels in the Skin Trade** (£13.99), his objective and sensitive exploration of the Thai sex industry. Where press coverage of prostitution in the Far East more often consists of sensationalist travel guides for the depraved shrouded in ill-informed moralising, Seabrook raises uncomfortable questions about the rights of Thai women and children and their exploitation at the hands of the men who travel to the country in expectation of their services.

Angie Zelter is one of the Trident Three, three women who, in 1999, were taken to court after they boarded a barge in a Scottish loch and threw some computer equipment overboard. However, they were acquitted on the basis that they were global citizens preventing nuclear crime. A subsequent in depth examination by the High Court highlighted a number of vital questions over the legality of a state's deployment of nuclear weapons. In Zelter's new book, **Trident on Trial** (Luath Press, £9.99, ISBN 1-842820044), the history of the case is presented, as are such key questions as 'In whose name does the UK government deploy over 140 nuclear warheads, each around 10 times more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima, which killed 150,000 people?'

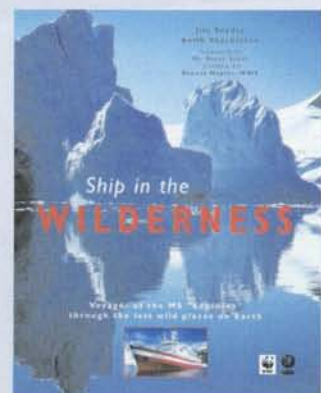
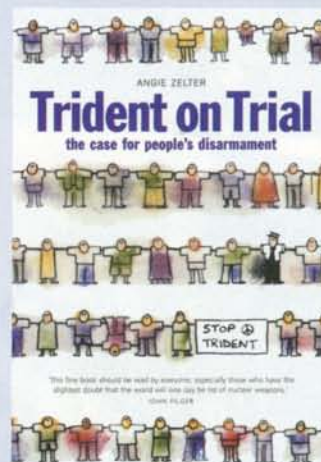
If these three leave you despairing of the world's fate, then **Ship in the Wilderness** by Keith Shackleton and Jim Snyder (Gaia Books, £19.99, ISBN: 1-856751929), may offer a reminder of what a beautiful planet we live on, when human beings aren't around to despoil it. Charting the ocean voyages of the MS Explorer the book is filled with breathtaking images of Antarctic icescapes, penguins crowding the slopes of a volcano and countless other records of the remotest parts of the Earth, all visited by this ship over the past 20 years.



JEREMY SEABROOK



JEREMY SEABROOK



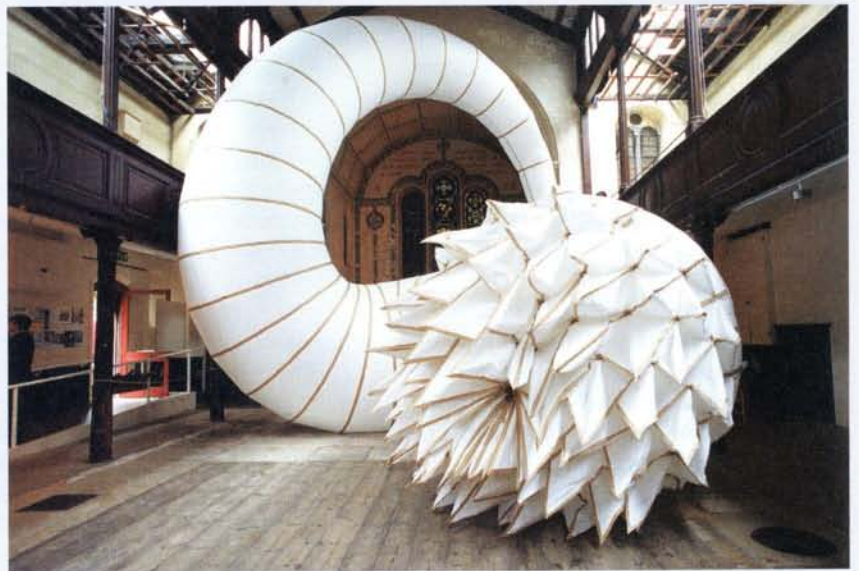
and worth seeing...

John Pilger's **Great Eyewitness Photographers** (below left) is on at London's Barbican Gallery until 30 September. The exhibition draws together some of the greatest, and therefore frequently most harrowing, examples of photojournalism from the last century, capturing images from Burma to East Timor to social decay in Nineties Britain. For those wishing to scratch beyond the surface of these images, John Pilger will be joined by exhibiting photographers and other commentators on 22 September for a debate 'Reporting the World: is photojournalism dying?' Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2, tel: +44(0)20 7638 8891, web: www.barbican.org.uk.

Melting the Stars is not the latest celebrity TV concept from Channel 5, but rather a selection of photographs by Joey Bieber recording the lives of the people of Burma with compassion and understanding (top right). It runs at the Brunei gallery in central London until 7 December. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1, tel: +44 (0)20 7898 4046, web: www.soas.ac.uk/gallery.

Last chance! Those of you brave enough to dip a toe in the sea at Brighton this summer may fancy drying off at **Pulp** (below right) an exhibition taking place at the city's Fabrica gallery until 2 September. Using the paper detritus that amasses in a tourist hub such as Brighton over the summer, the artists aim to capture the essence and energy of summer in the city. Fabrica Gallery, 40 Duke Street, Brighton BN1, tel: +44 (0)1273 778 646, web: www.fabrica.org.uk.

Fragile Boundaries is a new exhibition by Teresa Pemberton (bottom right) running at the Moreton Street Gallery from 20 September to November 6. The exhibition has grown out of research that the artist has undertaken into the disappearance of butterflies from the English countryside over recent years, which she attributes in a large part to modern farming methods. Moreton Street Gallery, 40 Moreton Street, London SW1, tel: +44 (0)20 7834 7773.

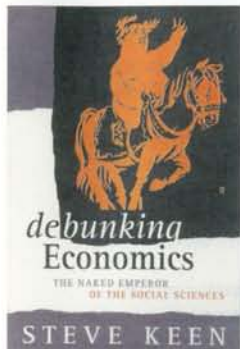


DEBUNKING ECONOMICS THE NAKED EMPEROR OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

by Steve Keen

ZED BOOKS 2001/£15.95

ISBN: 1-85649991X



There can be few critics of current environmental problems who have not, at one time or another, cast a deeply suspicious eye on the pronouncements of economists. But between the suspicion that the wool is being pulled over our eyes and being able to articulate our doubts lies a chasm littered with graphs, equations and

miscellaneous mathematical detritus. The aim of **Debunking Economics** is to provide a much-needed guide through this terrain.

What is currently taught and studied in universities as economics is, in fact, just one particular school of economics, the neo-classical. It developed in the late 19th century and has almost totally dominated the discipline since the banishment of last remnants of Keynesianism in the 1970s. Its central dogmas are well known: people are inherently selfish and the economy, if left to itself, will find and maintain a stable position which promotes the common good.

Keen is scathing about how neo-classicism has maintained its dominance through the teaching of economics in a way that ignores the discipline's history and development. He is thus anxious not simply to criticise the neo-classical school but, in the second part of the book, to cover topics not normally taught in universities. Among the matters dealt with are the failure to theorise economies as moving rather than static, and the way in which the study of the economy as a whole has been ignored in favour of the creation of small-scale theoretical models.

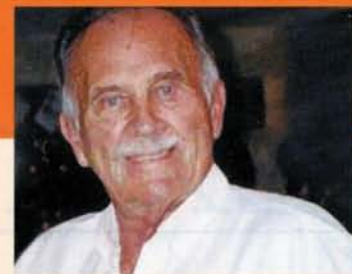
Keen also demolishes the assertion that stock markets price correctly, pointing out that the theory on which this was based was developed by Irving Fisher in the 1920s and that he himself developed another theory following his personal loss of \$100 million in the 1929 crash.

The work is clear and concise in its style with the aims and structure of each chapter being crisply spelled out in advance. Keen admits that there is no avoiding the difficulties and dullness of the subject matter yet he copes admirably with lightening even the stodgiest fare.

By providing in a single volume both an introduction and critique of the basics of neo-classical economics, as well as an outline of the various alternative schools, this book is a unique and valuable resource.

Mihail Dafydd Evans

Gard Binney



Uncovering a chemical cover-up

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SLOGAN 'BETTER LIFE THROUGH CHEMISTRY'?

For many years, the Du Pont company's slogan was 'Better Life through Chemistry', but for some reason the chemical giant has now stopped using it in its print and television advertising. Could it be that the irony of this bit of boardroom braggadocio is too rich even for the Du Pont brass? Be that as it may, the fact is that even the most trusting American consumers have become increasingly leery of the loudly-proclaimed benefits of some 70,000 new chemicals introduced on to the market since WWII. Only a handful of these synthetic compounds, which now saturate the land on which our crops are raised, the air we breathe, and the water we drink, have so far been thoroughly tested for safety by the Federal Drug Administration or other regulatory agencies.

One reason why it is so difficult for the average consumer to separate fact from fiction in the daily media blitz of conflicting messages, is that most mass media today are owned by corporate conglomerates, which also include the makers of many products containing harmful or questionable chemical components. Attempts by independent researchers or investigative reporters to ferret out the truth about some of these suspect substances are usually met by stonewalling or character assassination at the hand of corporate PR pimps.

The aggregate advertising expenditure of the dozen or so largest US chemical companies last year was over \$6 billion. That kind of big bucks buys a lot of space, air time – and silence!

But one voice which would not be silenced belongs to Bill Moyers, a freelance writer and television reporter of impeccable moral and professional credentials, famous for his objectivity and many revealing exposés of corporate shenanigans. He recently prepared a two-hour documentary, aired by PBS – an independent network not relying on income from TV commercials – outlining the hidden ecological and health hazards inherent in the use of plastics, pesticides, aerosol sprays and other products touted by the chemical industry as valuable contributions to the American way of life (or death?). Many cancers, birth defects, malfunctioning immune systems and reproductive disorders – not to mention global warming and other ecological disasters in the making – can be traced directly to products of the chemical revolution in the last half-century.

There is nothing remarkable in this televised documentary *per se* – what makes it newsworthy is the extraordinary lengths to which the chemical conspirators went to silence it: their unrelenting efforts to trash it and its author, and their use of outright lies to conceal the deadly truth from the American people. As reported in the invariably

well-informed Washington newsletter, *The Hightower Lowdown*, Moyers used internal industry documents to reveal what these corporations have known for decades: 'that their products and manufacturing processes are killers, and that they have engaged in an outright conspiracy to cover up this knowledge, deliberately withholding it from workers, doctors, government regulators and the public at large.'

Two months before his programme was scheduled to transmit, the American Chemical Council (ACC), the industry's lobbying and public relations front, set its main reputation fixer and 'VP for strategic communications' on Moyers and the show's producer, demanding to be informed in advance about the contents of the programme, and putting them on notice that 'the Council expects the program to be accurate, balanced, and fair' – standards that the ACC itself has rarely lived up to. Moyers replied that the programme was 'a work in progress', for which he hadn't even done the narration yet, but that its final half hour would be devoted to a panel discussion, in which two industry spokesmen would participate [as well as an environmentalist and a public health expert].

These safeguards of objectivity did not satisfy the paid attack dogs of the ACC (which incidentally is a major campaign contributor to the congressman who oversees funding of public broadcasting). They insisted that the programme be previewed by the industry, claiming – though they had yet to view it – that it was a slanted and misleading 'scare story... masquerading as journalism'. But despite the verbal and legal onslaught, PBS stayed true to its principles and aired the programme, a victory of sorts for free speech – supposedly a cornerstone of the US Constitution!

As UN Secretary Kofi Annan pointed out in a recent speech, *a propos* President Bush's proposal to revive nuclear power without any provisions for disposing of hazardous waste, and with total disregard for any environmental concerns or the danger of global warming: 'We do not face a choice between economy and ecology. In fact, the opposite is true: Unless we protect resources and the earth's natural capital, we will not be able to sustain economic growth.'

Not surprisingly, his speech was largely ignored by the mainstream media. Only such fiercely independent magazines as *The Nation* took note of it, while suggesting that the \$100 billion earmarked by Dubya's Pentagon pals for resuscitating Reagan's still-born Star Wars scheme, would be better spent on developing alternative energy technologies, ie solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, and hydrogen fuel cells ■

THE Exchange

The Exchange is a noticeboard for environmental and ethical services and needs, open to all. Entries are FREE for individuals and NGOs, charities and campaign groups. For businesses and educational institutions, the cost is £54 per listing, including a year's free subscription to the magazine. Repeat listings are £20 per issue, £10 extra for a boxed ad. Please send entries – no more than 40 words long – together with cheques where necessary made payable to *The Ecologist*, to Sally Snow, The Ecologist, Unit 18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ, or email sally@theecologist.org. For more information, call Sally on +44 (0)20 7351 3578. Free listings are allocated first-come first-served, and we reserve the right to refuse any entry.

APPEALS

Students required – spent your entire student loan in the first week? Well we can't offer you it back, but we are looking for students to help us find new outlets to stock *The Ecologist*. And yes, there will be a commission involved. Give Sally Snow a ring on +44 (0)20 7351 3578 if you're interested.

Do you have a spare PC with Windows 98? If you do, you could help us at World Voices, an initiative set up by a group of young people passionate about exploring and demonstrating alternatives and solutions to unsustainable forms of progress. Please call us on +44 (0)20 738 7444 or visit our website www.worldvoices.org.

HELP! We need **waste/damaged/unwanted CDs** and optical media (ie old ISP software and CDRs etc) Please mark your donation 'Thanks 4 the Memories'. Also **old wine bottle corks**. Please mark your donation 'Bark-Back'. Send to PO Box 26232, London W3 7GT, including your name and address for entry into our recycled products raffle. Email us at: cre.ltd@virgin.net

Foot and mouth has brought some of our rare breeds to the edge of extinction. We need them to rebuild a greener farming system. The Rare Breeds Survival Trust is building a **National Regeneration Bank** and needs your help. Tel: +44 (0)8707 282 244 or send cheques (payable to RBST Regeneration Appeal) to RBST, NAC, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG.

Thousands of children die each day in poor countries because of unpayable debt. Send a donation to **The World Development Movement** and help tackle the root causes of poverty. 25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR, tel: +44 (0)20 7738 3311, web: www.wdm.org.uk

How can just £2 a month help poor people to help themselves? OXFAM works to find lasting

solutions to poverty and suffering. Visit our website, www.oxfam.org for details.

Question: The world's most endangered cat lives in (a) Africa? (b) Asia? (c) South America?
Answer: Western Europe. The Iberian Lynx could be extinct within a decade. SOS Lynx urgently needs your help – before it is too late. Contact sos.lynx@clicx.pt.

Adopt a Mother Foundation launches new project, aiming to change lives of 50,000 slum families by 2005. For further information, visit www.aamf.org.

URGENT APPEAL! Farmtalking is helping farmers affected by foot and mouth fight in the courts to save their livelihoods by resisting the DEFRA-imposed cull. We need to raise £30,000 as soon as possible. If you can help, send cheques (payable to Ian Smith & Partners) to: Farmtalking Legal Fund, 11-13, Murray Street, Duns, Berwickshire TD11 3DF. For more information visit: farmtalking.com.

CALL FOR PAPERS

3rd International Symposium on Sustainable Agro-environmental Systems: New Technologies and Applications. 26-28 October 2002, Cairo, Egypt. Submit a 250-word summary by 30 November 2001. For further information, contact Prof Sami Abdel-Rahman, National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences, 23 Joseph Bross Tito St, Einozha Elgedida, Cairo, Egypt; Tel: +20 2296 4386 or 2297 5688; Fax: +20 2296 4387 or 2296 4385.

CAMPAIGNS

Change Planning Laws on Mobile Phone Masts. Please sign up to our internet petition asking government to require full planning permission for all masts (as recommended by government's own Stewart Independent Panel) at: freespace.virginnet.co.uk/mast.action or email: libdem@kent.gov.uk

There's no such thing as cheap food. Pledge a donation of £3 a month and receive *Living Earth* magazine and an informative video. Together we can change the way Britain farms. The Soil Association: www.soilassociation.org.

The global aspect of environmental attack is becoming more and more evident. We are launching a worldwide campaign for the creation of support communities. Write to us: Harmonie Environnement Progrès, Chateau des Princes d'Orange, F-71480 Cuiseaux, France, for petition form or call: +33 03 85 727 626.

The scandal of GM maize. We cannot allow GM maize to go ahead. Join the Friends of the Earth campaign against the planting of new GM crops. www.foe.co.uk.

Wake up and smell the GM Coffee. ActionAid's new campaign to halt the development of GM coffee, which could wipe out the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers in developing countries. Such coffee will not hit the shelves for several years, but NOW is the time to stop it. www.actionaid.org/campaigns/coffee.html.

Hate piped music? Join Pipedown's campaign for acoustic freedom and fight for a world where every corner is NOT filled with muzak. Send sae for details to PO Box 1722, Salisbury, SP4 7US, UK or visit www.btinternet.com/~pipedown.

GMNetworkScotland – exposing the realities of genetic manipulation, especially in foods. Discover your power to bring about change. Everyone can participate. Call: +44 (0)141 334 4355, 51 Hyndland Street, Glasgow, G11 5QE, visit us at www.gmfreescotland.net.

COLOMBIA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN is working for a socially just and sustainable peace in Colombia. Campaigns specifically against US military intervention through Plan Colombia and its disastrous human and environmental consequences. Colombia Solidarity Campaign, PO Box 8446, London N17 6NZ, tel: +44 (0)7950 923 448; email: colombia_sc@hotmail.com.

COURSES

Looking at the nature of our mind. A residential retreat with Sister Annabel Laity, senior Dharma teacher in the Order of Interbeing, led by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. Families welcome, 5-10 October, St Leonard's, Sussex. £145 inclusive. Further information: Ann Irving, +44 (0)1933 663 149, email: seecolin@hotmail.com or visit: www.interbeing.org.uk.

Schumacher College is an international centre for ecological studies that welcomes course participants from all over the world. The College runs short courses on ecological issues and a one-year MSc in Holistic Science. Schumacher College, The Old Postern, Dartington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EA, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1803 865934; Fax: +44 (0)1803 866899; email: schumcoll@gn.apc.org
Web: www.gn.apc.org/schumachercollege/

ASODECAH – Organic farm in Cost Rica which runs four-week Sustainable Development Courses. Includes Spanish tuition. You will work closely with local people in formal and hands-on settings. For details, visit: www.la-flor.org.

BSc Sustainable Development and Environmental Management. Orkney College and Heriot-Watt University have collaborated on this degree focusing on the interplay between the environment and the developments on which future generations will depend. Contact Orkney College: email jim.chalmers@rkney.uhi.ac.uk.

One-day course, **Small Mammals: Ecology, Survey and Management.** 1 September, Kingcombe Centre, Dorset. For information contact: The Mammal Society, 15 Cloisters House, 8 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BG, tel: +44 (0)20 7498 4358; email: enquiries@mammal.org.uk or visit: www.mammal.org.uk.

Permaculture Design Course Online begins 14 October. Runs for six months and includes reading assignments, weekly posts of lectures, email discussion, student reports. Full details: barkingfrogspc.tripod.com/.

Technical writing and editing. Home study course with a £150 grant – you pay only £25. Open to UK and EU nationals over 19. For information call: +44 (0)1392 683 617 or email: techwriting@hermitagepress.co.uk.

Environmental Trainers Network (ETN) offers a wide range of training events in Birmingham, Manchester, London, Leeds, Reading, York, Bristol and Worcester. Full details: www.btcv.org/etn. Contact: ETN, c/o BTCV, Red House, Hill Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 6LZ; tel: +44 (0)121 358 2155; email: ETN@ukgateway.net.

MSc in Human Ecology. The Centre for Human Ecology, Edinburgh, Scotland, champions environmental sustainability and social justice, and is accredited by the Open University. Call +44 (0)131 624 1974, email: registrar@che.ac.uk or visit: www.che.ac.uk.

Renewable Energy in the Urban Environment are organising a free training course for plumbers to do solar water heating installations. For more information, contact RENEUE on +44 (0)20 8542 8500 or email: cleanpower@reue.freeseerve.co.uk

ECO-BUYS

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how to keep a chemical free home www.aquaball.com



own natural filtration system. Solar panels heat the water to enable outdoor swimming at a comfortable temperature. For more information, telephone Peter Vezey on +44 (0)1438 833 778 or email: prman14@hotmail.com

The Green Stationery Company operates an economical, nationwide Green office supplies service. If you are interested in the environment then you should be using this service for stationery supplies. Call: +44 (0)1225 480 556 or visit: www.greenstat.co.uk

The People Tree is the UK arm of the Japan-based Fair Trade Company. We sell fashion goods, accessories and gifts according to the principles of paying fair wages to economically marginalised people in the developing world. We favour the use of natural materials and handicraft skills. Clothing uses natural or azo-free dyes and where possible the producers use organic cotton, alpaca or natural wools. People Tree. Good For You. Good For The Earth. Call +44 (0)20 7808 7060 for a catalogue.

Common Ground have produced a new 16-page publication leaflet featuring cards, posters, books, leaflets and slide packs. Please send A5 sae to: Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21 High Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JE, or visit www.commonground.org.uk

EVENTS

September, various venues throughout the UK
One day seminar on Biodynamic plant breeding and organic seed research. Gloucestershire, Aberdeen, Yorkshire, Sussex, North Wales. Details from: The Biodynamic Agricultural Association, tel/fax: +44 (0)1453 759 501, email bdaa@biodynamic.freeserve.co.uk, web: www.anth.org.uk/biodynamic

2 September, towns throughout the UK
Survival supporters are holding a day of sponsored walks in aid of tribal people such as the 'Bushmen' of Botswana. For information, contact Liberty Bollen on +44 (0)20 7687 8700.

2-14 September, Sannemorets, Bulgaria
EYFA Summer Gathering and Coastal Clean Up. Camping, workshops, clean-up campaign on beautiful stretch of Bulgarian coastline. For application form, email: gathering2001@eyfa.org or visit: www.eyfa.org

4 September, London, UK
Demonstration at DEFRA, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR, 10 am, to highlight concern over continued death of dolphins and whales caused by entanglement in fishing nets. For information, contact Cetacean Bycatch Campaign, telephone +44 (0)20 7499 9196; email bycatch@marineconnection.org.

8 September, London, UK
World Development Movement Cabaret, Upper Hall, Battersea Arts Centre, 7.30-midnight. Music from the Blazing Homesteads and the Soul Agents, stand-up comedy, food and dancing. Ticket only (£10 each, special offers available). Contact WDM on +44 (0)20 7738 3311; email: lara@wdm.org.uk; web: www.wdm.org.uk

8 September, Birmingham, UK
Hedgehog Workshop (funded by Endangered British Mammals Fund) at University of Birmingham. £25, including lunch, available from The Mammal Society on 020 7498 4358.

20-23 September, De Haan, Belgium
Bridges Over Troubled Water, Social Venture Network Europe Conference 2001. For information about SVNE and updated conference news, visit: www.svneurope.com

23 September, Oxon, UK
'How can we Save the Countryside?' Discussion Day led by Roger Higman, Mike Breakell, Stephen Hart. 9.30am. 6pm, Braziers Park, Ipsden, nr Wallingford, Oxon OX10 6AN. £15 including refreshments. Overnight accommodation available by arrangement. Bookings: tel: +44 (0)1702 556 600, email: admin@braziers.org.uk

24-27 September, Manaus, Brazil
Amazon Ecotour 2001. Bringing together people interested in sustainable development of the region through ecotourism projects. Details available at: www.ecotourenglish.com.br.ms

13 October, Coventry, UK
Heaven and Earth: Christianity, Food and Land Use, Ryton Organic Gardens, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry. 10.30am to 4.30pm. Booking essential. Telephone Christian Ecology Link +44(0)1423 871 616 or visit: www.christian-ecology.org.uk

18-19 October, Rotterdam, Netherlands
International Responsible Investment Conference. Online registration and payment for the conference now available. Visit www.tbli.org for details.

21 October, UK
The 12th annual celebration of apples, orchards and local distinctiveness. For information on events close to you, send A5 sae to: Common Ground, Gold Hill House, 21 High Street, Shaftesbury, SP7 8JE or visit www.commonground.org.uk

26-27 October, Konstanz, GERMANY and Romanshorn, SWITZERLAND
Promoting Non-violence and Protecting Human Rights: the role of civilian third party initiatives in conflict areas. Peace Brigade International (PBI), telephone: +41 (0)1 272 27776; email: pbizurich@dataway.ch or visit www.peacebrigades.org

6-10 November, New Delhi, India
Global Conference on Environmental Education. We invite scientists, policy makers, national and international NGOs and interested citizens to explore opportunities to achieve sustainable development through environmental education. For details, visit: www.iesglobal.org

JOIN

GREEN. A grassroots organisation working with small and marginal farmers towards conserving, promoting and reviving biogenetic and cultural diversity in the dryland regions of South India. Post Box 7561, Bannarghatta Road, Bangalore 560076, India, tel: +91 080 6097393; fax: +91 080 6651729.

The International Green Network Japan. Who can join? All individuals and groups that would like to help create a just and sustainable society, both in Japan and internationally. For more information, email Richard Evanoff: evanoff@sipeb.aoyama.ac.jp

Friends of Peoples close to Nature – Intercultural. Movement of groups and individuals concerned with survival of tribal peoples and their culture, in particular hunter-gatherers. Visit: www.fpcn-global.org

Save the Earth International. Currently working in 85 countries. Our focus is on Earth care, Peoples care and Fair sharing. For the Campaign's goal and objectives visit our website www.bangladeshonline.com/gm2000se

Raifuture, an independent voluntary organisation campaigning for a better rail network for the environment, communities and the economy. If you would like to join us so that we can make an even bigger impact, send a cheque for £17.50 (made payable to Raifuture) to Freepost, Lon18153, Corby, NN17 1ZZ or visit our website www.raifuture.org.uk

PROJECTS

www.wastetraders.com
Businesses now have the opportunity to reduce the costs of their waste disposal, profit from the sale of waste and improve their environmental image – the online waste exchange. For more information, email: info@wastetraders.com or telephone Andy Nolan on +44(0)7946 594 607.

www.ourbirmingham.net is a community portal for Birmingham with the aim of finding new ways to use the internet to improve our quality of life. For further information, please contact Nick Other on telephone +44 (0)121 776 7744, email: other@rms-ltd.co.uk

Street Tree. Non-profit organisation founded on the belief that trees should form a significant and necessary part of the urban landscape. Our aim is to increase London's tree stock and start a perpetual fund that will ensure and enhance London's reputation as a 'green city'. The Street Tree Project, 22 Cranley Gardens, Suite 5, South Kensington, London SW7 3DD; tel/fax: +44 (0)20 7370 7671; email: info@streettree.com

PUBLICATIONS

The Deeply Green Book Guide. For beginners and experienced activists, journalists and

academic researchers. Download free of charge at www.gn.apc.org/eco. For paper copy, send four 1st class stamps to Sandy Irvine, 45 Woodbine Road, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1DE, UK.

Lowland raised peat bogs continue to be lost because people still buy peat for their plants and gardens. Peatling Out – a joint English Nature and RSPB report – gives details on where to obtain working alternatives to peat. Write to: RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL enclosing sae and two 1st class stamps.

CANOPUS Foundation study on youth involvement in environmental work in Europe. Available in German at CANOPUS Foundation, Gruenwaelder Str. 10-14, 79098 Freiburg, Germany; Tel: +49 761 2020172; email: info@canopusfund.org or in English from Kirsten Neumann, 58 Windsor Road, Palmers Green, London N13 5PR; Tel: 020 8886 4047; email: kirsha@canopusfund.org

The UK's Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy by Paul Ekins. Through the modelling of detailed programmes of government, support for renewables, CHP and household energy efficiency, and discussion of the policy context, this report maps progress towards a sustainable energy path for the UK to 2020. Copies (£15) available from Vanessa Mamo-Mason, Sustainable Economy Programme, Forum for the Future, Overseas House, 19-23 Ironmonger Row, London EC1V 3QN or visit: www.forumforthefuture.org.uk

'Circumpolar Overview of the Natural Environment', produced by Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna. For further information, contact Mats Enger, Swedish Ministry of the Environment +46 070 591 3583 or visit the website www.environ.se

Little blue packs of rat poison sit on millions of dinner tables! It's Aspartame/Nutrasweet/Equal. New text on medicine and pharmacology that should be required reading for every physician. For ordering information, visit: www.sunsetpress.com

Questions & Answers

Ever wanted to know how much it would cost to convert your home to solar power? Or what sweatshop conditions are really like, and which companies use them? This new service aims to put such answers at your fingertips. Just send us any question you have, we'll post it here and on our website, and then aim to put whoever thinks they know the answer in touch with you. Send your questions and answers to Sally Snow, *The Ecologist*, Unit 18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ, or email sally@theecologist.org.

Here's a couple to get the ball rolling...

'A few years ago I bought a non-aspartame sweetener called Stevia made by Omega Nutrition. When I tried to buy it again, it had vanished from the shelves and I was told that it was now unobtainable. Is there something fishy going on, namely was it suppressed to avoid competition with the much less healthy Aspartame?'
J Cullen, Sussex

'I have been looking into using either straight veg oil or Biodiesel as a fuel for my vehicle and was wondering if someone knows anywhere in the UK where old diesel engines can be prepared for such a change in fuel?'
Nils Norman, via email

Now, it's over to you...

Computers out of control. What most people don't know about the many ecological four-page resumé, free, but contribution towards copying and p&p welcome. Graham Carey, 6 Granville Terrace, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 4HW; telephone: +44 (0)1274 568 973.

Visit LEAF's virtual farm. A CD-ROM that 'links the environment and farming' through adopting Integrated Farm Management; a better environment and creating partnerships between farmers and local communities. Details from LEAF, telephone: +44 (0)2476 413 911; email: leaf@farmline.com.

RESOURCES

The Ethical Partnership is a co-operative of Independent Financial Advisers who specialise in Ethical and Socially-responsible investments. Contact Derek Vivian, tel: 020 8763 1717; email: tep@dwwivian.idps.co.uk; website: www.the-ethical-partnership.co.uk The Ethical Partnership is a Member of IFA network Ltd which is regulated by The Personal Investment Authority.

Personal and global change. Responding to the challenge of the global crisis. Talks and meetings by Michael Eaglemeare. Available to give talks/meetings. No charge is made. Enquiries please telephone: 01392 877228; email michael@eaglemeare.org; website: www.eaglemeare.org

Anyone in need of urgent farming help from farming people ready to listen confidentially (and to offer emotional, spiritual and practical support – including linkages to other sources of special help) can ring Farm Crisis Network (FCN) on +44 (0)7002 326 326.

Leeds Environmental Design Associates. Architects and environmental engineers committed to improving the environmental performance of buildings. We have extensive experience of low energy design and construction, as well as other areas of environmental design expertise such as water recycling and waste minimisation. Tel: +44 (0)113 2785341, email: office@leda.lrg.uk

Renewable Energy for the Home. For free and impartial advice and information on solar, wind, hydro, biomass, geothermal and green electricity tariffs, telephone free on +44 (0)800 138 0889 or visit: www.greenenergy.org.uk Operated by registered charity The National Energy Foundation.

SITUATIONS WANTED

Seeking employment in 'green' sector. Experience as overseas volunteer, and in international trade and sustainable marketing. Please contact Mark: mamosio@aol.com

Experienced anti-GM foods campaigner is looking for a paid position, ideally within the anti-GM or organic sector. Computer literate, currently running busy email list supplying GM news worldwide. Ideal job offer would be home-based and self-employed. Please reply to Ron Baxter, email rbax@aol.com, fax: +44 (0)1695 558 719.

We are an engineer couple seeking green jobs (especially interested in renewable-alternative energy systems) anywhere in

the world. Job satisfaction as important as remuneration. If you think we can be of help, please contact us, email: canboga@hotmail.com.

VISIT

The Greenhouse, 42-6 Bethel Street – Norwich's Environment Centre. Shop, Café, Meeting rooms and Information service. Open Tuesday–Saturday 1-5pm. Visit our website www.norwichgreenhouse.fsnet.co.uk or telephone: +44 (0)1603 631007.

The Earth Centre, Doncaster, UK. Newly-opened Welcome Hall and Castle View Conference Centre constructed with recycled materials. Visit www.earthcentre.org.uk for details of this and many other attractions.

Gaia Energy Centre, Delabole, North Cornwall. New centre demonstrating harnessing of wind, water, solar, geothermal and crops. Includes resource centre, library, lecture theatre, classrooms, shop, café. Call Fiona Edwards, +44 (0)1840 213 321.

From mid-July–December, UK
Farmers' World Network (FWN): Agricultural and County Shows programme 2001. Planning to visit any agricultural/county shows in the UK this summer? If so, how about visiting the FWN display stand to find out more about what's really going on in both the UK and Global agriculture? For details, visit our website www.fwn.org.uk or call +44 (0)2476 696 969.

Organic Friends, vegetarian and organic wholefood shop, juice bar, nutrition education centre. 17-19 Springfield Road, Harrow, Middlesex. Telephone: 020 8863; email: naturesfood@organicfriends.co.uk; web: www.organicfriends.co.uk

VOLUNTEERS

I am working on creating wildlife habitat that is off-limits to humans. I have spent the last 8 years fighting auto-dependence and road construction. Want to help? Visit: home.pacbell.net/mjvande

We need some help in our office so we can champion environmental sustainability and social justice more effectively. To find out more, please contact: Osbert Lancaster, Centre for Human Ecology, 12 Roseneath Place, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH1 1YG; telephone: +44 (0)131 624 1972.

Humanitarian and environmental volunteer projects in over 150 countries worldwide. Visit www.workingabroad.com or email info@workingabroad.com.

Are you a college student looking to boost your income? Would you like to help distribute *The Ecologist*? Then give Sally a call on 020 7351 3578 or email sally@theecologist.org for more details.

Sunseed Desert Technology. Low-tech educational research centre, Spain. Focus on desertification, society and the environment. We offer Green Working Holidays Student Placements. Volunteers work in our organic gardens, tree-nursery, Dryland Regeneration or Appropriate Technology departments.

www.sunseed.org.uk or telephone 01926 421380

Are you interested in volunteering and travelling overseas? Workingabroad is a personalised information/consultancy service for those wishing to volunteer in the environmental and humanitarian domains in over 150 countries worldwide. For more information, tel/fax: 01273 711406; visit www.workingabroad.com email info@workingabroad.com

WEBSITES

www.icaew.co.uk/library.htm
Institute of Chartered Accountant On-line Sustainability Resource Centre. Provides links to the latest information on sustainable development in the business environment.

www.geocities.com/treesweb
The Tambopata Reserve Society (TreeS). Promoting conservation initiatives and encouraging sustainable development amongst local peoples in south-east Peru.

www.wdmscotland.org.uk
New website detailing the activities of the World Development Movement's Scottish branch, and how you can help the campaign.

www.animalfeed.org.uk
New website about genetically modified animal feed, including information on where it's entering the food chain, news items, action updates, addresses and ideas for action.

www.the-ethical-artnership.co.uk
How to invest ethically.

www.babymilkaction.org/
The latest information on the campaign to protect infant health from the aggressive marketing practices of the baby food industry. Also exciting new merchandise.

www.corpwatch.org
Holding corporations accountable.

www.journaliststoolbox.com
The site features hundreds of links for reporters and editors worldwide, as well as links to international journalism organisations, search tools and databases. Site built in the US, but features many global links of interest to journalists anywhere.

www.grain.org/about/subscribegrain.cfm
Genetic Resources Action International Join the new email list. In English, French and German.

www.kumoro.com
For information about Northwest Amazonia, its indigenous inhabitants and political ecology.

www.nei.org
Nuclear Energy Industry. See it here, in all its absurdity.

www.web-agri.com
The first real agricultural search engine (not a directory site).

cnr.org/Lovins_figure_4.htm
How to save three quarters of US electricity use.

www.unchs.org
New interactive, searchable site, publications, videos, feedback forum, discussion forum, from

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, Nairobi, Kenya.

www.saveourenvironment.org
By using the Save Our Environment Action Center you are working together with the nation's most influential environmental advocacy groups in the crucial battles to protect our air and water, forests and oceans, climate, wilderness and wildlife.

www.monbiot.com
Work from the mighty pen of George Monbiot, one of the UK's finest eco-crusaders, collected online at long last.

www.onlineopinion.com.au
On Line Opinion is Australia's Internet journal of social, political and cultural debate. Each month we publish articles of interest to people with an interest in Australia – from people in the know to people who want to know.

www.care2.com
Care2.com provides an effective way for eco-conscious people to protect and preserve the environment – 10 per cent of site revenue donated to other top environmental organizations, **Care2.com** integrates commerce, content, and community and offers free, innovative and useful Web services, including e-cards, email, headline news, and shopping.

www.wdmscotland.org.uk/globalnetwork
Global Network News provides regular, concise updates on major events related to globalisation happening in Scotland, and around the world. Subscribers will receive a short, weekly e-mail. Links will be provided to the full text and to the original source. And it's free to subscribe.

WANTED

Back issues of *The Ecologist* and similar magazines for Anglo-Irish-Colombian ecological community working amidst tragedies of civil war. Jenny James, Atlantis, Caqueta Rainforest Amazonia Campaign, Telecom Belen, Huila, Colombia.

SEEDS for environmental, organic farming project in Colombian rainforest, to help local people plant a variety of crops and move away from farming of opium for heroin. Jenny James, Atlantis, Caqueta Rainforest Amazonia Campaign, Telecom Belen, Huila, Colombia.

Have you got these back issues of *The Ecologist*? Vol 1/12; Vol 2/1; Vol 5/1; Vol 7/4 and 5; Vol 9/3; Vol 10 ALL; Vol 11/1; 3, 4, 5 and 6; Vol 12/1, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Vol 13/2 and 3; Vol 14/2; Vol 15/1, 2, 3, 4, and 5; Vol 16/6; Vol 17/1 and Vol 19/6. Please email: mcctait@waitrose.com with details of issues owned and asking price.

CAMPAIGNS DIARY

3–5 September 2001
Universität für Bodenkultur Wien, Vienna, Austria
International Conference On Conflict Assessment & Resolution For Reservoir Systems. Tel: +44 (0)207 477 8148
Web: www.city.ac.uk/ica/ or www.unesco.org/

4 September 2001
Bonn, Germany
Sustainable Food Security For All By 2020:

From Dialogue To Action

Web: www.ifpri.org/2020conference

5 September 2001

ICA, the Mall, London SW1 UK

The End of the Line

A debate on the state of British transport. Chaired by Frances Cairncross, management editor at *The Economist*. Speakers include: Andrew Murray, communications officer at ASLEF, Phil Goodwin, professor of transport policy at UCL; Gwyneth Dunwoody, MP, chair of the Commons Transport Select Committee. Call +44 (0)207 7930 3647, or visit www.ica.org.uk.

5-7 September 2001

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

BioFuture 2001

'Advancing Our Double Helix World as the Canadian biotechnology industry continues to strengthen'. Visit www.biofuture.org or call +1 403 254 9222

9 September 2001 to 15 September 2001
Dresden, Germany

ICOLD – 69th Annual Meeting

Web: genepi.louis-jean.com/cigb/index.html

10 September 2001 to 14 September 2001
Hokkaido, Japan

Second IAHR Symposium on River, Coastal and Estuarine Morphodynamics

Email: sikeda@fluid.cv.titech.ac.jp

10-11 September 2001
The Hatton, London, UK.

Innovations in Transgenic Technologies

The economic, regulatory and legal issues within the industry will be discussed, with particular reference to patenting and regulatory compliance for transgenic technologies. Visit www.smi-online.co.uk/transgenic.asp or call +44 2078276066.

10-14 September 2001
Arequipa, Peru

EXTEMIN 2001

Convention for suppliers interested in the Peruvian mining market. Organised by the Canadian Association of Mining Equipment and Services for Export (CAMESE). Visit www.camese.org or contact +1 905 513 0046

10-14 September 2001
Mannheim, Germany.

Rainwater International

Visit www.rainwaterconference.org or call +49 (0) 6151 339257.

10-28 September 2001
Geneva, Switzerland.

FAO-WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues

Visit www.fao.org or call + 39 6 5705 4010.

11-14 September 2001
London, UK.

DSEi Arms Fair

Contact Campaign Against Arms Trade on +44 (0)207 281 0297 or email enquiries@caat.demon.co.uk.

13 September 2001

ICA, The Mall, London SW1, UK.

Can Large be Local?

Are supermarkets ruining the heart of British communities – or do they provide us with a more effective and affordable way to meet our

needs? Visit www.ica.org.uk or call +44 (0)207 7930 3647.

13-15 September 2001

The Pilgrim Centre, Swindon, UK.

Radical Consultation

Forum participants include Kirpatrick Sale, George McRobie and Chris Wright. Call +44 (0)1453 752 277 or visit www.realnations.net.

15-18 September 2001

Centennial Auditorium & Convention Centre, 35-22nd St. E. Saskatoon, Canada.

ABIC 2002 – 4th Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference

'The program highlights the exciting convergence of agricultural biotechnology with life sciences, molecular farming, genomics, health care and nutrition.' Visit www.abic.net or call +1 306 683 2242.

16-21 September 2001

Hjortshoj, Denmark.

Pan-European NGO seminar on Sustainable Energy

INFORSE-Europe, Gl. Kirkevej 56, DK-8530 Hjortshoj, email: ove@inforse.org.

17-19 Sept

UN/ECE Committee on Human Settlements

Tel: +41 22 917 4444,
email: info.ece@unece.org.

18-20 September, 2001

Earls' Court 2, London

Space & Remote Sensing Feature at GIS

www.gisexpo.com or
telephone +44 (0)20 8987 7584.

19-21 Sept

UN/ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Review

Tel: +41 22 917 4444
Email: info.ece@unece.org

20 September 2001

Southampton, UK.

Revitalising Communities in a Globalising World

Visit www.ciscodew.soton.ac.uk

20-21 Sept

WTO Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

Tel: +41 22 739 5412,
Email: peter.ungphakorn@wto.org

22 September 2001

Global.

Car-Free Day

www.22september.org or
www.carbusters.ecn.cz

24-29 September 2001

London, UK.

18th Session of the IPCC Plenary

Visit www.ipcc.ch or call +41 22 730 8574

26-27 September 2001

Naples, Italy.

NATO Defense Ministers Meeting

See www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/po1-063e.htm or call +32 2707 5038

26-28 September 2001

Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Certified Forest Products international conference

Visit www.Cfpconference2001.org

28 September – 4 October 2001

Washington DC, USA.

IMF-World Bank Annual General Meeting

See www.worldbank.org/pos or call +1 202 473 3394, www.whirledbank.org and www.50years.org or call +1 202 463 2265.

29 September – 4 October 2001

Istanbul, Turkey

8th European Vegetarian Union (EVU) Congress

Sept.30-Oct.2 2001
The Roosevelt, New York City

11th Annual Pharmaceutical Strategic Alliances Conference (PSA)

Phone: (203) 838 4401 x 101

Website: <http://www.windhover.com>

'This meeting is your best chance to hear top executives and industry leaders from around the world discuss the new forces that will affect you and your company in years to come.'

1 October 2001

Global.

Nuclear Weapons Abolition Day

Visit www.motherearth.org/nuke or call +32 9242 8752.

Go MAD next year

In November we are publishing **GO M.A.D (Go Make A Difference)** a pocket-sized guide packed with 365 practical and useful tips on how we can all take one daily action that will benefit our environment, ecology and community.

Through **Go Make A Difference** we are looking to narrow the gap between the principle and practice of ecological living. We aim to educate, enthuse and entertain people with our shared message; that change is easy, enjoyable and a 'must'.

Each tip focuses on an action that we can take to enhance our local or global ecology or an action that we can avoid which will prevent a damaging impact on our ecology. At *The Ecologist* we've got 30 years of archived material to work from, but we desperately want to hear your ideas and tips.

- What ten things would you like people to make part of their daily life (or to avoid) if you could?
- What would be the effect if people took that action both personally and for the wider community?

*You can Make A Difference
with The Ecologist*

It's over to you!

Please email your top environmental tips including as much supporting information as possible to:

watchdog@thinkpublishing.co.uk

Or send your tip to:

Go MAD Top Tip, Think Publishing, Vigilant House,
120 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1JZ

If we publish your tip, we'll send you a free copy of the book on publication.

references

Page 10 News

- 1 *The Observer* 08/07/01.
- 2 www.corpwatch.org/un/updates/2001/riotintob.html.
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 *Rio Tinto Review*, June 2001.
- 6 *New York Times*, 24/6/01.
- 7 *International Herald Tribune*, 2/7/01.
- 8 *Sunday Times*, 22/7/01.

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- 1 *The Great British Environmental Survey 2001, The Ecologist*, vol 31 no. 4, May 2001, pp33-39.
- 2 Letter from Highton to A.E. Drake, UKAEA, 17th February 1958, PRO file AB 16/2399.
- 3 Letter from A.E. Drake to Highton, UKAEA, 6th March 1958, PRO file AB 16/2399.
- 4 Letter to Matthew Taylor MP from DERA, 5 June 1997, ref: DERA/SEC/5/7/126/97.
- 5 Some reports are available from the US Department of Energy - for example, *Operation Roller Coaster - Interim Summary Report*, September 1963, and Atomic Weapons Research Establishment report no. 0-29/65, 1965.
- 6 Army Scientists Kill 11,000 Animals a Year, *The Independent*, 22 November 1997.
- 7 Letter from Dr. G. Wortley, MAFF, to Dr. R.C. Norton, Medical Research Council, 14 August 1961.

- 8 Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP), Annual Report 1990, Department of Health/Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food.
- 9 Report of the Committee on the Ethics of Genetic Modification and Food Use, MAFF, 1993.
- 10 ACNFP Annual Report, 1994, p9, MAFF/Department of Health.
- 11 Food Advisory Committee, Annual Report, 1994, p5.
- 12 MAFF Press Office, 4/8/1997.
- 13 MAFF News Release, 28/2/95.
- 14 MAFF statement to author, 4/4/97.

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- 1 Ave, Jan and King, Victor. *People of the Weeping Forest*. Leiden, Netherlands (National Museum of Ethnology) 1986.
- 2 Barber, Charles. *The Project on Environmental Scarcities, State Capacity, and Civil Violence: The Case Study of Indonesia*. World Resources Institute (U. of Toronto website: www.library.utoronto.ca/pcs/state.htm).
- 3 Brookfield, Harold, Potter, Lesley, and Byron, Yvonne. *In Place of the Forest: Environmental and Socio-economic Transformation in Borneo and the Eastern Malay Peninsula*. New York (United Nations University Press) 1995.
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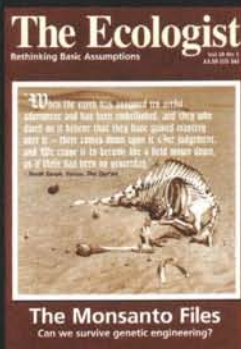


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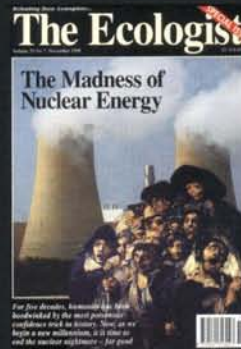
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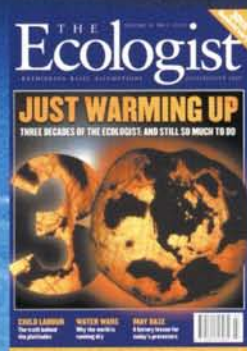
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